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DR. BURROUGH's  
LECTURES  
ON THE  
CHURCH CATECHISM, &c.

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LECTURES  
ON THE  
CHURCH CATECHISM,  
CONFIRMATION,  
AND THE  
NATURE AND OBLIGATION  
OF  
RELIGIOUS VOWS.

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PREBENDARY OF PETERBOROUGH.

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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TO THE  
INHABITANTS  
OF  
WISBICH, LITTLE GRANSDEN,  
AND  
WILBURTON,  
IN THE  
DIOCESE OF ELY.

*My good Friends and Neighbours,*

*I* Send you this little Book, that, when it shall please God to render me incapable of instructing you publicly, I may yet be serviceable in your private houses. Happy, if I could foresee a certainty of your making use of it as occasions shall require, and especially on Sundays, when you have leisure for it, and when it is your duty to instruct your Families.

I have endeavoured to explain the Church-Catechism so, as to render it intelligible to all of you, even those parts of it which treat of the Two Sacraments; but if you meet with some difficulties in them, you will impute it to the Nature of the Subjects; you will not be discouraged thereby, when you consider they are merely to ascertain what are the real Properties of a Sacrament, distinct from Rites of an inferior Order; and when these are established, you will proceed with pleasure to the moral parts of them, which are plain and easy.

In the next place, having often found by Experience that many Children, nay, even adults, can readily repeat the Catechism without understanding it, and if you vary the Questions, either in the Form of Words, or in the Course of them, they are instantly confounded; I have drawn up a Method of Examination, the use of which you will soon see. It is a string of questions, which you should put to them, after they have been taught to repeat it as usual. I have not added Answers to them,

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them, for that would not remedy the evil complained of; but I refer you to such parts of the following Lectures as treat of those Matters which the questions lead to. Thus, when at any Question you see a Letter prefixed, as (a) or (b) you are to look for the same in the several Lectures.

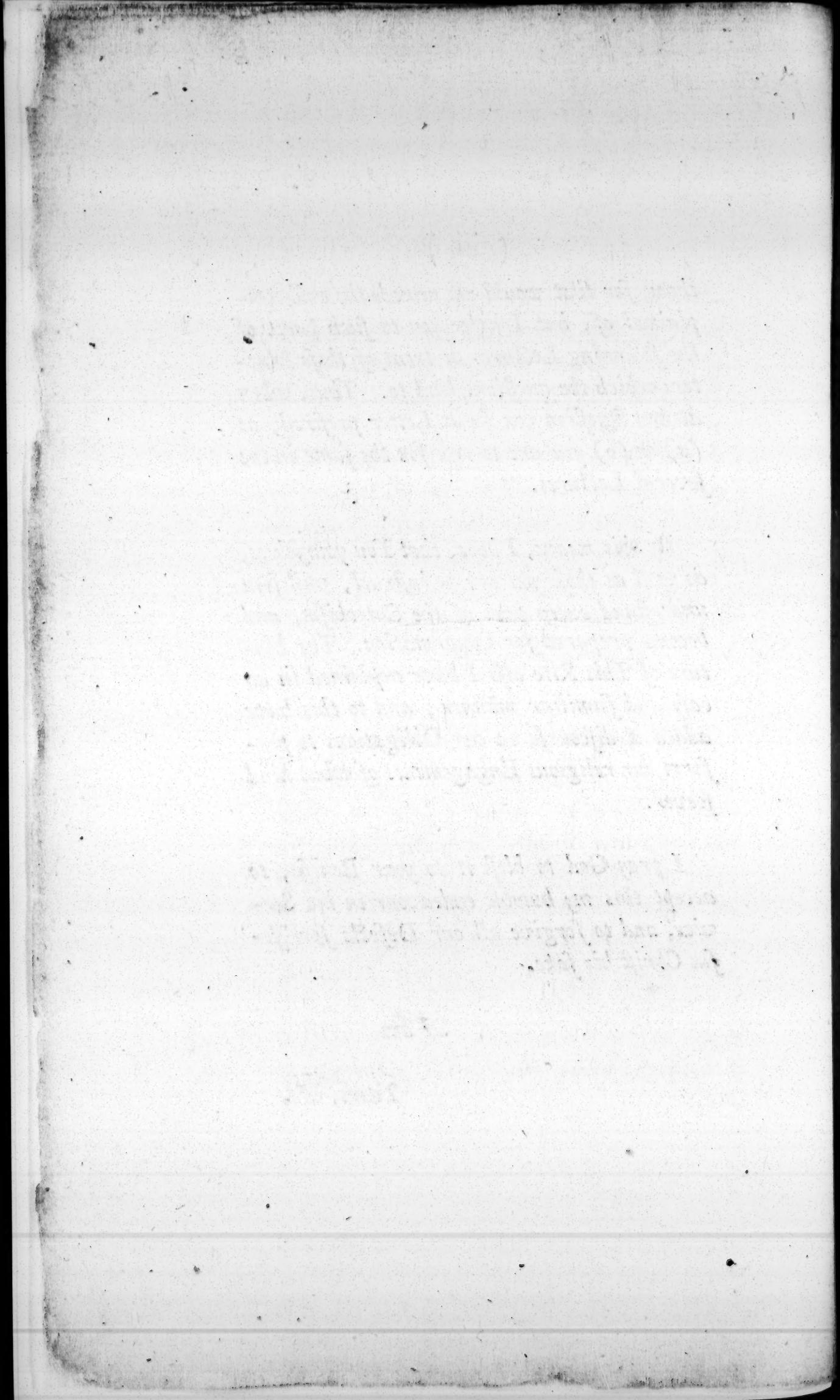
By this means, I hope, that You yourselves, as well as those you are to instruct, will soon understand every part of the Catechism, and become prepared for Confirmation. The Nature of This Rite also I have explained in an easy and familiar manner; and to this have added a discourse on our Obligations to perform our religious Engagements of what kind soever.

I pray God to bless it to your Benefit, to accept this my humble endeavour in his Service, and to forgive all our Defects for Jesus Christ his sake.

\*

I am

Yours, &c.



LECTURES  
ON THE  
CHURCH CATECHISM, &c.

## L E C T U R E I.

St. MATT. xxviii. 19.

GO YE THEREFORE AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST.

THESE are the Words of the blessed JESUS to the eleven Disciples, who met him by his appointment at a mountain in Galilee; they contain his last instructions to them, and are the

## 2 *Of our Baptismal Covenant.*

original Commission, under which they, his Successors, and we, who are their's, claim Authority to teach, and to baptize.

To teach, signifies to preach the Gospel, and make proselytes to it; and where the person, to be initiated, is of ripe age and understanding, this teaching should precede the act of baptizing, in order that he may understand the nature of that Religion he is thenceforward to profess, and the obligations which commence upon the administration of that Rite.—Thus too, as Infants and Children, unable to judge for themselves, are charitably represented by their Sponsors, these Sponsors should consider what they in the Name of them engage for, and the Nature of those professions and duties they are afterwards to inculcate. This, I am afraid, is too much neglected, and that many wantonly engage for others, who have never seriously considered what was promised for themselves; although the Church in Can. 29, requires that they should not only

*Of our Baptismal Covenant.* 3

only have been baptized, but also should have received the Lord's Supper.

This Evil is principally owing to these two Causes. Most parents think they have sufficiently discharged their duty when once their children can repeat the Catechism; and others, because it was imposed upon them as a Task in their younger years, think to look into it at a riper age is going to School again. And thus Both, being long accustomed to repeat it by Rote, without attending to the Sense of it, rest contented with That all their Lives after.

Here I cannot help lamenting a very great and general error in the Education of Children: the Catechism is almost the first thing put into their hands, and the next are the holy Scriptures: as if any set of words would not teach them to spell, and any collection of little innocent tales invite them to read. Sure I am that no great good can arise from repeating

#### 4 *Of our Baptismal Covenant.*

peating the Catechism before they are of an age to understand it; till then therefore it is better postponed. Thus too, was the Bible thrown in their way when History begins to be entertaining, and never sooner, they would read it with pleasure, and that pleasure would increase with their years; but for want of this, the Bible, like the Catechism, is looked upon as a Task, and laid aside, like the other, when they most want it, and might reap most Advantages from it. Yet surely it is necessary to know the Will of God, and in order to it, necessary to recur to that original Compact wherein it is set forth, and our obedience to it inforced.

This makes a Review of the Church Catechism at all times, and with all persons, highly necessary. I shall therefore attempt, in what follows, such an one of it as may not only be of use to yourselves, but to such also as you are required to instruct.

But,

## *Of our Baptismal Covenant.* 5

But, before I proceed, it may not be amiss to obviate an Objection, by which some are grossly misled. *Infants, they say, are not sensible of what is transacting at their Baptism, and therefore it would be better either to defer it, till they come to years of Discretion, or then to rebaptize them.*

As to the particular Age, when it is proper to administer Baptism, since we have no express direction concerning it, our best way is to look out for something of a like nature, and observe the rules prescribed in relation to it. Now Circumcision is a Rite of a like nature; this, like Baptism, was a foederal Rite, was instituted by God himself, and at the time of its Institution made a necessary duty, as Baptism is made since: in short, it was That in the Jewish Religion, which Baptism is in the Christian: and if it was, then such, as were admissible to the one, may be admitted to the other: But the Jews were commanded to circumcise their children on the *Eighth day*, and they

B 3 did

## 6 *Of our Baptismal Covenant.*

did it; our Saviour himself in obedience to the Law, which, till he entered professedly on his Ministry, continued in force, was circumcised on the Eighth day: and if so, it is a plain case that Children, may lawfully, nay, ought to be baptized in their Infancy.

Here then is another Objection started. If it be so, how came the Apostles to say, *Repent, and be baptized?* Mankind in Infancy cannot repent. I answer, they neither can repent, nor need they do it: nevertheless, the Apostles did right when they enjoined Repentance, that is, they did right in requiring it of those to whom they addressed themselves: but who were they? Adults, grown-up persons, persons who had committed actual Sins; an Infant has not, and the great necessity of Baptism to him is founded in the original Sentence of Death pronounced on Adam, and all his Descendants: this Sentence God is pleased to reverse upon our entering into a new Covenant with him; by which

## *Of our Baptismal Covenant.* 7

which He vouchsafes to remit that debt of Punishment, and restore us unto Immortality; And we by our Sponsors engage to believe in him, and to serve him, when we shall become capable of so doing. This is all that is required of us, in Infancy, in order to Baptism. But more than this is required of Adults, of such as the Apostles commanded first to repent: They had committed many sins, of which it was necessary they should repent previously to this Act; but this Injunction by no means affects those who are baptized in Infancy. This was nearly the case of our blessed Saviour, he himself was baptized of John; but if Baptism be of no validity unless the subject of it repents, why did he tell the Baptist, *it behoved him thus to fulfil all righteousness?* and why was he baptized *who knew no Sin,* and consequently could not repent? His perfect Innocence puts Him, with regard to Repentance, on a Parallel with a Child in Infancy.

B 4

Thus

## 8 *Of our Baptismal Covenant.*

Thus much for the First part of the Objection. *As to rebaptizing Christians when they come to years of discretion,* this is quite unnecessary, and, if unnecessary, is to trifle with God, and unpardonable. Now that it is unnecessary is evident from hence: Baptism is a Covenant, a solemn Agreement or Stipulation between Two Parties; and therefore this, like all other Covenants, if once entered into, and solemnly ratified, is indissoluble without the Consent of Both. My executing the same Deed again and again doth not alter, nor increase, the Obligation of it; I stand as much bound by what I did a Twelve-month ago, as by what I did yesterday. And thus the Covenant, which I entered into at my Baptism, in Infancy, binds me to the end of my days: It was a Contract, not for a few years of my life, but for the whole of it; nor can any thing I do afterwards strengthen the Obligation. Surely therefore all persons may be very well satisfied with what was done for them by their Sponsors, in Baptism, at least,

## *Of our Baptismal Covenant.* 9

least, with what they do for themselves at Confirmation, in a more advanced age.

As I am led to this Subject, I am not willing to dismiss it till I have explained it thoroughly. Let us therefore examine a Text or two brought in support of the Objection. Our Saviour saith to Nicodemus, *except a man be born anew of water and of the holy Ghost: and farther, except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* But here you are to observe, that our Saviour is speaking to a Jew, to one who had not been baptized: all therefore which was intended in these expressions is, that in order to enter into the kingdom of God there must be an entire change of his former opinions and practices; that he must undergo as great an alteration as if he was to enter a second time into his Mother's womb and be born. — Here also you should be told, that by *the kingdom of God* is not meant *the kingdom of Heaven*, but that Spiritual kingdom which Christ was then to esta-

10 *Of our Baptismal Covenant.*

establish, that is, the Christian Church : From hence it is plain that nothing, said or applied to Nicodemus, as a Jew, can have any relation to, or at all affect those, who have been baptized into Christ.

Neither can any argument for it be drawn from the Example of Jesus, as having been baptized of John ; for he had not been baptized before : he had been circumcised, and was obedient to the Law of Moses till the time of his Conversation with Nicodemus : he was now to begin His ministry, and to introduce another, and a better Religion ; and, as Baptism was to be the initiatory Rite, or Method of Admission into it, he began with it himself. Nothing therefore can be assumed from this example, except the necessity of being baptized *Once*, but it affords not the Shadow of a Reason for doing it *more than once*.

There is no one Passage, that I know of, in all the *New Testament*, that gives the

## *Of our Baptismal Covenant. 11*

the least Countenance to such a Practice, and but one in the *Old*; and this we find in Joshua, Ch.5. *At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the Children of Israel the second time. And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the Children of Israel.* From hence some have advanced, that if *Circumcision* be a Rite correspondent with *Baptism*, if the one was to be repeated, and by the express command of God, the other also should be repeated. But here we see how necessary it is to study the Scriptures, or to consult such as do; to compare Scripture with Scripture, and learn the Writer's meaning from himself: not to take it in detached Sentences, but ingenuously examine what goes before, and follows. If this Rule was observed, many Passages, that are woefully misconstrued, would be understood, and the Spirit of Delusion put to flight. In the case before us, what a Difference is there when we hear the Whole of it! The words are these; *And this is the Cause why Joshua did*  
*cir-*

## 12 Of our Baptismal Covenant.

circumcise; All the people that came out of Egypt, that were Males, even all the Men of War, died in the Wilderness by the way after they came out of Egypt. Now all the people that came out were circumcised; but all the people that were born in the Wilderness by the way, as they came forth out of Egypt, Them they had not circumcised: For the Children of Israel walked forty years in the Wilderness till all the people that were Men of War which came out of Egypt were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord: unto whom the Lord sware that he would not shew them the Land which the Lord sware unto their Fathers that he would give them, a land that floweth with Milk and Honey. And their Children whom he raised up in their stead, Them Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the Way. — This is the only Passage that seems to countenance Re-baptizing, and this, rightly understood, does effectually, and beyond all contradiction, reject it.

This

## *Of our Baptismal Covenant.* 13

This being premised, I proceed to explain the Church Catechism. But first I am to inform you, that Baptism, in the Beginning of the Catechism, is not treated of as a *Sacrament*, but merely as our *Admission into the Christian Church*. It is considered as a *Sacrament* in the latter part of it, at present you are to look upon it only as an Entrance into Christ's Church, and a Declaration of the Terms of the new Covenant between God and Man.

It begins with this *Question*, *What is your Name?* Every man has Two Names, his *Christian Name*, and his *Surname*; his *Surname* he derives from his Parents at his Birth; the other he acquires at his Baptism (a). What particular Name, it has pleased our Parents or others to give us at Baptism, is no material part of the Institution; but the Church, for good and wise reasons, bids us to repeat it. For instance, Whatever it be, it was given me at my Baptism, when I was made a Christian,  
and

## 14 *Of our Baptismal Covenant.*

and therefore called my Christian Name (b.) For which reason, whenever I hear, or repeat it, it should remind me of my Profession, remind me of my Duty, and never fail to suggest that the mention of it is a reproach to me, unless I answer the Character which it denotes: that is, unless I act up to it, and be a Christian in Deed, as well as in Name (c).

The next Question is, *Who gave you this Name?* The Answer is, *my Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism* (d). These do more than meerly give us our Name; they engage to see us act agreeably to it; they are to admonish us, whenever they observe we deviate from it; they are to teach us all things, which a Christian ought to know, and believe; they are to call upon us to practice them: And this their Charge ceases not till we have discharged them of it; which cannot be before our *Confirmation*, and does hardly cease then: they are bound to see us confirmed, and cannot be thought to exceed.

## *Of our Baptismal Covenant. 15*

ceed their Commission if they afterwards remind us of our solemn Vows at that time. — What a shame is it to engage for all this in the Church, in the sight of God and his People, and then pay no more regard to it than if the whole was a meer piece of Mockery, an Human Soul of no Estimation, and our Promises to God never to be required at our hands!

But to proceed. *In my Baptism, wherein I was made a Member of Christ, the Child of God, and an Inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven (e).*

In order to understand this aright, you must recollect that by the Disobedience of *Adam Sin came upon all, and Death by Sin.* We had forfeited our Title to Immortality, and no hopes of Existence beyond the Grave remained. Under this forlorn condition all his Descendants continued, till it pleased God to select from the rest of mankind a peculiar people, with whom he entered into a Covenant of

## 16 *Of our Baptismal Covenant.*

of Reconciliation; of which Circumcision was the sign. This Covenant remained until the coming of Christ, when It expired, and a New one was published in it's stead; not confined, as the former, to a particular people, but freely offered to All Nations. In This *Baptism* took the place, which *Circumcision* held in the Other; we are admitted to it through this means, and at our Admission God engages for certain things, on *His* part, and We for certain things, on *Ours*. Both these Engagements are set forth in the Catechism.

The first thing granted by God is, that *We are hereby made Members of Christ.*

This is a figurative Expression, taken from an human Body, and signifies, that by Baptism we are made *One with Christ, and Christ with us*, are united to him as our Head; and, whereas in consequence of Adam's transgression we were like Branches lopped off from the Mother-  
Tree,

*Of our Baptismal Covenant.* 17

Tree, we are by Baptism ingrafted, and again receive Nutriment from it (f).

This reminds us of the Honour due to Christ as the Head over all things, and teaches us to pay the same Obedience to Him as the Members of the Body pay to that superior Power which actuates Them: — that as every Member of the natural Body is serviceable to all the rest, so all Christians must do charitable and beneficent Acts to one another. — that we are Brethren, and should have such a fellow-feeling in each others pleasures and pains, as to abide by the Apostle's metaphor, *if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it* (g).

The second is, *That we are made the Children of God.*

His Children we were before Baptism, but not in the Sense we are after it: for, though we were the work of his hands;

C we

## 18 *Of our Baptismal Covenant.*

we had forfeited his favour, and to speak familiarly, were disinherited. But in Baptism he is graciously reconciled to us through his blessed Son, restores us to the light of his countenance, and makes us *Joint-heirs with Christ (b).*

And what doth this intimate, but that our Behaviour must be suitable to the relation we bear to him, that, as we are his Children, we must pay him the Obedience due to a Father: For otherwise, this Privilege, the most glorious and beneficial we have, will the more discover our unworthiness of it, and bring on our Condemnation, instead of preventing it (i).

The third is, *That we are made Inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven.*

In an unredeemed state we all are sinners: *the whole world, saith an Apostle, lieth in wickedness, and the wages of Sin is Death;* but in Baptism we triumph over it, and are not only restored to Immortality,

*Of our Baptismal Covenant.* 19

tality, but are assured farther that we shall possess it in the kingdom of Heaven: Christ will make us *fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and raise us to an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not, reserved in Heaven for us (k).*

And what do we learn from hence, but that all our Thoughts and Desires should tend to that place? that where our Treasure is, there should be our Hearts; that we are but Strangers and Pilgrims, and therefore should look forward to our Journey's End; that, although we must have our hour upon the stage of this Life, we have another coming that is far more desirable, and therefore should have *our Conversation in Heaven (l).*

These are the Benefits which God offers and engages to grant on his part; but in order to be intitled to them We must also perform our part of the Contract. What that is, is explained in the Answer to the next Question, viz. *What did your*

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*Godfathers and Godmothers then, or at your Baptism, for you? They did promise and vow Three things in my Name: First, that I should renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh (m).*

By the Devil and all his Works is meant all kinds of wickedness, especially such as most partake of the nature of that cursed Being, such as lying, of which he is the Father, Murder, Pride, Hatred, Malice, Revenge, Covetousness, Idolatry and the like.—By the Pomps of the World are to be understood vicious Customs, and Fashions, Ambition, Ostentation, and all such Entertainments and Pleasures as captivate and debase the Mind, and cause it to neglect worthier Objects.—By the Vanities of it are intended Riches unjustly gotten, or profusely squandered; all things, in short, that court only the present hour, and lull and deceive us till we stand amazed at our

*Of our Baptismal Covenant.* 21

our last. — By the sinful Lusts of the Flesh are meant Fornication, Adultery, Obscenity, in a word, all Uncleanness, whether in our Actions, Words, or Thoughts (*n*).

This is the First of the Three things promised for us by our Sponsors. The Second is, *That we will believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith (o)*. What these are will come in Course to be explained, when we rehearse the Articles of our Belief, and till then we wave them.

The Third is, *That we will keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our Life (p)*. These also shall be deferred at present, and the only remark I shall make on this part of the Covenant is, that we promise *to walk in the same all the days of our Life*. We engage not for a year or two, but for our whole Life; and shall do well to remember what St. Peter tells us; *It is better not to have known the way of righteousness, than*

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*after we have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to us; And further, the words of the blessed Jesus himself, No man taking hold of the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. Our Obedience to these commandments therefore must be uniform, and must be permanent (q).*

These things being promised for us by our Sponsors, there follows a very interesting and important Question : *Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe, and to do, as they have promised for thee?* to which the reply is, *Yes, verily.* But why so? no one has a right to engage for me without my Consent; this is a breach of natural liberty; whatever was undertaken for me, in my Infancy, I have a right to consider, at a riper age: if I approve of it, then, well: if not, I am at liberty to reject, and refuse, it. All this is true, and yet every Christian is bound to do what his Godfathers and Godmothers promised he should, and is as much obliged by Their promise

*Of our Baptismal Covenant.* 23

promise as if he had been of an age sufficient to understand what was doing, and had assented to every part of it. But this Obligation is founded, not in the promise made in his Name by them, but in the Nature of the things promised, which are, to believe in God, and to serve him; to be just, to others, and to himself. These are Duties of general and immutable Obligation, which therefore he must, and should, perform, whether others had promised he should perform them, or not. So that the person Catechised very rightly answers, *Yes, verily (r).*

He goes on, *and by God's Help so I will.* This is well added, and teaches us; not to trust to our own Powers and Endeavours; that without Him we can do nothing; that *we are not sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God:* And therefore *he heartily thanks his heavenly Father, that he hath called him to this state of Salvation:* which Salvation he acknowledges, as becomes him, *is through Jesus Christ, the only Name under Heaven by which we can be saved.*

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*saved. Here also he remembers that the same Grace, which called him at first, is necessary to his Perseverance; to guard him against the Temptations he is like to meet with, and the disposition of his Nature to relapse; and therefore he prays to God to give him his Grace, that he may continue in the same unto his Life's end; being confident of this very thing, that He, who hath begun a good Work in him, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ (s).*

We have now had a full view of the Covenant entered into, at our Baptism; *On one Side, we are made Members of Christ, the Children of God, and Inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven: On the Other, We are to renounce the Devil and all his Works; the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked world; and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh. Secondly, we are to believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith; And Thirdly, we are to keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our Life.* The First of these is already explained, and the Second in the following Lecture.

L E C.

L E C T U R E II.

WE have already considered what our Godfathers and Godmothers promised for us, or what is Our part of the Covenant entered into with God, at our Baptism. It consists, you find, of Three things: the First is, *that we should renounce the Devil and all his works, the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked world; and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh.* The Second is, *that we should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith:* These are what we are next to explain, and they are briefly summed up in the *Creed or Belief (a).* — It is commonly called the Apostles Creed; not because it was drawn up by them, but because it contains their Doctrine, and is a Compendium of what the New Testament delivers down to us from them (b). Hence it hath its *Authority:* Its *Use* is, to refresh the Memory, and enable it in few words to keep in mind the most important

## 26 *Of the Christian Faith.*

portant principles of our Religion (*c*). The Child therefore, every time he is catechised, is bidden to *rebearse the Articles of his Belief*: — It consists of Three parts (*d*), the First of which relates to God (*e*). *I believe in God.*

To believe in God, is to believe that there is a Being, eternal and infinite, perfect and self-sufficient: all-powerful and all-wise; just and holy; merciful and good: whose Power created all things, whose Providence sustains them, and whose *Kingdom ruleth over all*. It signifies further, that there is but One God, agreeably to the Declarations of Holy Scripture: *the Lord he is God, there is none else beside Him*: And again, *to us there is but One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all*.

He is described under the Appellation of **THE FATHER**, first, as he is the Author, and original Giver of Life to all Beings in the Universe; *of whom the whole*

*Family*

*Family in Heaven and Earth is named: Secondly, to denote his parental Affection, his Grace and Mercy towards all his Creatures; and lastly, as he is, in a peculiar manner, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

He is styled ALMIGHTY, because *of him, and through him, and to him are all things.* And we are told, that before the Consummation of Earthly things, and the Commencement of another endless and unchangeable State, the Son himself, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, *shall deliver up to his Father all Rule, and all Authority, and Power, which had been delegated to him by the Father, that God may be All in All.*

He is said to be THE MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, that, whereas in times of Ignorance, men worshipped the Host of Heaven, the Sun and the Moon, imagining them to be intelligent Beings, and ruling over this lower World, they should

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should now acknowledge them to be *the works of his Fingers*, directed and controulled by His Will; and Objects of their Admiration, but not of their Worship. This is the First part of the Creed.

The Second relates to God the Son(*f*). *And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord.* This very rightly follows the former; *Ye believe in God*, said our blessed Saviour, *believe also in Me.* The first of these Parts is the Foundation of Religion in General; the other of a Particular one, instituted by Christ.

We are to believe in Him. First, as JESUS, as the person *so named of the Angel before he was conceived in the Womb*; likewise, as he properly is what his Name signifies, the SAVIOUR. And he is the Saviour *by making himself freely an Offering for Our Sins, and appearing in the presence of God to make Intercession for us.*

We

*Of the Christian Faith.* 29

We are to believe in him Secondly, as CHRIST; as the person *anointed to preach the Gospel*, to be our King, and Prophet, and the *Author of eternal Salvation to all who obey him*.

We are to believe in him Thirdly, as *the only Son of God*, as a Person *far above all Principalities, and Powers; above Thrones, and Dominions, and every Name that is named*, being made so much better than the Angels, as he hath by Inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they: For unto which of the Angels said God at any time, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee (e)*. And, when God bringeth his first-begotten Son into the world, he saith, *And let all the Angels of God worship Him*.

Fourthly, we are to believe in him, as our **Lord**: as Him whom God hath given to be the Head over all things, *that at the Name of JESUS every Knee should bow, of things in Heaven; and things on Earth, and things under the Earth; and that every Tongue should*

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*should confess that JESUS CHRIST is Lord to the Glory of GOD THE FATHER.*

The next Article we profess to believe in is, that *he was conceived of the Holy Ghost*: that is, that his Conception was miraculous, and that although he took upon him the nature of Man, he yet was conceived without Sin.

*And born of the Virgin Mary.* This is mentioned to ascertain his Genealogy, and to shew that he was born of the *House and Lineage of David*, as foretold in the Scriptures. The Conception, and being born of a Virgin, is that *Mystery of Godliness*, which will be unravelled hereafter; which we believe, at present, upon the Authority of the divine Word; and into which, till we are more perfect, it becomes us not to pry farther.

*Suffered under Pontius Pilate.* That the Messiah should suffer is plain from many of the *Mosaic* institutions, which were  
Types

Types of him — From them it might easily be collected that *without shedding of Blood there could be no Remission of Sins*. It was further, and more expressly, declared by the Prophet *Isaiah*, that he should suffer. How, and in what manner, he suffered is set forth hereafter; but we have first a particular Circumstance mentioned, which is, that he suffered under *Pontius Pilate*. This Circumstance was inserted in the Creed for many good Reasons: among others, it determines the Time when he suffered, and shews that it corresponded with several Prophecies, especially *Daniel's*, and a very ancient one in the first Book of *Moses*, which says, *that the Sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come*. Pontius Pilate was the Roman Governor of *Judæa*, and consequently at that time the Sceptre was departed from it — from hence too it appears that he suffered at the Expiration of *Daniel's Weeks*: the time from whence that calculation proceeds is very well known; and it is evident, recourse being

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had to the Records which were kept at Rome, and preserved the acts of its Governors in different Provinces, that, when Daniel's Weeks concluded, Pontius Pilate was Governor of Judæa, and that, during his Administration, Jesus Christ was crucified.

Thus, having proved the Time of his Suffering, we next particularize the manner of it. Crucifixion was a Roman punishment, inflicted upon none but the vilest Malefactors: It was also a most painful, and most tedious Death. These Circumstances of his sufferings are added not only to remind us of the exceeding Malignity of Sin, and the greatness of his mercy towards us, but also to point out the completion of two extraordinary Prophecies: the one is, *that he should be lifted up as the Serpent in the Wilderness*: and the other, *that he should make his Grave with the wicked.*

The next Article is, *that he was dead.*  
This

This was added to oppose an erroneous opinion that he suffered in Appearance only: but it is plain he did really die. This is evident from the *Blood and Water* that issued from his side, which could not be in a living subject: And also from the Testimony of the Executioners who brake the Legs of the two Thieves, crucified with him, to put an End to the remains of Life in them; but did not break His, *because that he was dead already.*

It follows, *And was buried.* This is a Confirmation of the preceding Article. We read that *Joseph*, a rich and honourable man of *Arimathea*, begged the body of *Jesus* and laid it in his own new Tomb. This Circumstance literally fulfilled the remaining part of *Isaiah's Prophecy*; for as in his Crucifixion he made his *Grave with the wicked*; so he made it *with the rich in his Death.*

The next Article is, *He descended into Hell.* Of this many various Senses  
D have

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have been adopted. Some have thought that he really suffered the torments of the damned; but this cannot be the true meaning; It was impossible for him to despair of the Favour and Forgiveness of God, and therefore he could not feel, as do the damned, *that Worm which never dieth.* Neither are we to suppose that he descended thither to bring others from it; for the wicked according to express declarations of Scripture are never to be delivered. Nor again, are we to understand by it, that he went to triumph over the Devil; for the only kingdom the Devil has is in this World; and here Christ effectually triumphs over him by destroying Sin, which is his Dominion. — Farther it is said, in the preceding Article, that he was buried, and therefore his Descent into Hell must mean something more than merely descending into the lower parts of the Earth: the Intention therefore of the Expression must be this, that as his Body was actually buried, **so** his Soul was actually departed from it;

it; And it was made a part of the Creed to silence some Heretics, who, to destroy the Credit of his Resurrection, pretended that he was never really dead. The Article therefore asserts that he went down into Hell; And Hell, in the original Word here used, signifies, not a place of Torments, but the invisible place of departed Spirits, in which all remain, from the End of this Life, till the commencement of another, at the day of Judgment.

Thus far we have seen what was properly his *Humiliation*: his disrobing himself of Glory, his Incarnation, his Sufferings, his Death, and his Burial; and are now to turn our eyes to his *Exaltation*. *The Third day he rose again from the dead.* He had by his Death satisfied the Justice of God, and was now to become the First-fruits of them that slept. He was crucified on the Friday, lay in the Grave the remaining part of that day, the whole of the next, and arose on the third; and therefore, in the language of the Jews

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and other Nations, is said to have lain in the Grave three Days. He lay so long, that there might be no Room to doubt his being dead; and he lay no longer, that his Body, agreeably to the Psalmist's prediction, might not *see Corruption*. — He arose on the first day of the Week, the day after the Jewish Sabbath; on which Account it is that, whereas they observe the Seventh in Commemoration of God's resting from the works of Creation, we observe the First in remembrance of a greater blessing derived to mankind by the Resurrection of Christ.

The Intention of our Lord's Resurrection was to declare his Victory over Death: *Death hath no more dominion over him, For in that he died, he died unto Sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.* — And God hereby *begets Us unto a lively hope*, and assures us, *that if we be planted in the likeness of his Death, we shall be also in the likeness of his Resurrection.* That is, if we become *dead unto Sin, Crucify our Old Man, and continually mortify all our evil and corrupt*

*rupt Affections, He who raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken Our mortal Bodies.*

The Consequence of his Resurrection is, that *he ascended into Heaven*. As the Jewish High-Priest, after he had offered for the sins of the whole people, entered into the *Holy of Holies*; so our Saviour, who was typified in him, after he had sacrificed himself for the sins of the whole World, ascended into *Heaven*. This Article therefore affords great comfort to all Christians; for what doeth he in Heaven but present his Meritorious Oblation, and intercede for us. Neither *have we in him an High Priest who cannot be touched with a sense of our Infirmitiess*; for he himself also was tempted; and being made like unto us, *Sin only excepted*, knoweth how to compassionate, as well as to succour, us.

It follows in the Creed, *And sitteth on the right Hand of God*. That is, he is admitted to a State of the highest Dignity and Might: *All Power is given unto him*

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*in Heaven and in Earth; Angels, Authorities, and Powers being made subject unto him: He is set far above Principalities, and Powers, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but also in that which is to come: and the Throne of God, as St. John expresses it in the Revelations, is become the Throne of God and of the Lamb.*

From both these Articles it follows that he is the only Mediator between God and Man, *the only Mediator*, as he is declared in Scripture, *of the New Testament*. He hath purchased to himself a Church with his own Blood, and given himself for our Sins, that he might deliver us from the Evils of this Life, and secure to us Immortality and Bliss in the next. And hence we see how much we dis-honour him when, with the Papists, we join other Mediators with him, and give to Saints and Angels any share of that Worship, which belongs to him solely.

After

After this follows another, and a very interesting Article. *From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.* The unequal distribution of things in this World leads us naturally to expect another, in which this shall be adjusted; but *Revelation* confirms our Conjecture, and says expressly, *that God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the World in Righteousness; And that every man shall receive according to what he hath done in the Body, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* — It also goes farther, and declares by whom this Judgment shall be administered, and names *the Man Christ Jesus*: Before Him, it is said, *shall be gathered all Nations; that he shall be revealed from Heaven with the holy Angels in flaming Fire, taking vengeance on all that know not God, and obey not the Gospel:* — *that he shall descend from Heaven with a Shout, with the voice of the Arch-angel, and with the Trump of God:* — *that all that are in the Grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the Resurrection of Life, and*

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*they that have done evil unto the Resurrection of Damnation. Of that day, and of that Hour knoweth no Man, no not the Angels that are in Heaven: It will come as a Thief in the Night: And as the Flood came upon the Old World while they were eating and drinking; so will the coming of the Son of Man be unexpected and sudden. For this reaſon it is ſaid to judge the quick and the dead; those who ſhall have ſlept through Ages, and those who ſhall be alive at his Coming.*

The confideration of this ſhould make us tread cauſiouſly; every Hour leads to our laſt, every Hour may be our laſt; and, as his Coming will be immediately ſucceeded by a general Judgment, let us always have in Mind the matters of Enquiry at it. Now our bleſſed Saviour has vouchſafed to tell us, that a principal one will be how far we have performed the duties of Charity; and by Charity, we are to understand all thoſe Properties

properties which St. Paul ascribes to it, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians.

I have now explained the first and second Part of the Creed, which relate to God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ ; and proceed to the Third, which relates to the Holy Ghost (g).

It begins thus, *I believe in the Holy Ghost.* — That there are Three Persons in the Godhead is the doctrine of the Church of England, and confirmed to us by the Holy Scriptures. That they exist together is certain, although the Mode of that Existence doth not fall within our present Capacities: This is reserved for that time, when what we now see through *a Glass darkly* shall be distinct Vision, and *we shall know even as we are known*: at present it is an Object of Faith only, yet rests upon an Authority which we cannot dispute. This makes it reasonable, as well as right, to believe in this Article. And since we are commanded to be baptized in the

Name

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Name of the Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father and the Son, we can have no doubt but that the Three Persons, so far at least as they concern Christians, are equal.

The next, we profess to believe in, is, *The Holy Catolick Church.* The Holy Catolick Church signifies, either all those, who in this Life did their utmost to serve God, and now *form the general Assembly that are written in Heaven;* Or the *Christian* Church distinguished from the *Jewish.* The Jewish was confined to One people, distinct in this, as well as in their civil Polity, from all others; the Christian breaks down the Partition Wall, comprehends all Mankind, and will, before the general Consummation, prevail over all Nations, People, and Languages; and the Kingdoms of the World be, one and all, the Kingdom of Christ. — According to others, it signifies, that part of the universal Church which now exists, as distinguished from that which went before, or

or shall be after it. And Lastly, which indeed is the best Sense, that which is visible upon Earth, in an outward Profession of the Gospel of Christ, and an external Communion of the Word and Sacraments.

The next Article is, *The Communion of Saints.* This too has been considered in various Senses. The best, and most usually received, is, that by the Communion of Saints are to be understood the Members of Christ, united to him as their Head, and governed by the same Laws, *so that they being many are one Body in Christ, and all of them Members one of another.* And if so, it must be the Duty of all Christians to preserve this Unity in the Bond of Peace, mutually to assist, comfort, and instruct, one another ; in short, to *love as Brethren, having one Mind, and one Mouth, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven them.*

When

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When in the next place we say, we believe in the *Forgiveness of Sins*, we mean, that, till our blessed Saviour came to deliver us from it, we were all under the Dominion of Death, and that through his Merits only we are redeemed from it. This should remind us of what he requires of us previous to this Redemption, and It is, to be baptized in his Name, to perform the promises made at our Baptism, and, whenever we shall have transgressed one Duty, to return to it with true Repentance, and steady Resolutions to perform it for the future.

And this leads me to the next Article, *the Resurrection of the Body*. This is added, because, though many before the Gospel, from observing the Powers of the *Soul*, were able to collect its Immortality, no one ever conceived the like of the *Body*: This was seen to die, to decay, to dissolve: that it shall hereafter arise, and once more unite with the *Soul*, is the doctrine of Christianity only, which would

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would have been deemed impossible had it not been effected in the Person of Christ, and never could have been expected in in Our's, if He had not said, *because I live, Ye shall live also.* He arose from the dead to give an irresistible Testimony to the Truth of his Doctrines, as well as his Divinity; and thereby we are assured that, when *Christ, who is our Life shall appear, We also shall appear with him.*

And now comes the last of these Articles, *The Life everlasting.* It is placed the last, and immediately follows the Resurrection of the Body, because, although it is possible both the Punishments of the wicked, and the Rewards of good Men, may in some Degree commence from the Article of Death; the one in the Expectation of severe Torments at hand, the other in the comfortable Assurance of approaching Felicities, yet the Consummation of neither will be till the General Resurrection. But that, which we are principally to regard in this Article,

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ticle, is the word, *everlasting*. Whatever be the Punishment of the wicked, or the Reward of good Men, both, we are told in Scripture, will be everlasting. — What then are the Pleasures of Sin, that for them, which last but for a Moment, we subject ourselves to Misery without End: Or what the little Difficulties in our Warfare against it, when for These we shall be crowned with Happiness eternal!

I have now gone through the several Articles of the Christian Faith: and am next, as a Catechist, to ask, *What dost thou chiefly learn in these Articles of thy Belief?* to which you answer, *First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made Me, and all the World. Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all Mankind. Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth Me, and all the elect people of God (b).* This Answer, which is prepared to your hands, will enable you to recollect them, and the oftner you recollect

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lect them, the more you will understand, and profit by them.

I should now proceed to the Third thing promised for us at our Baptism, which is, that we *should keep God's holy Will and Commandments*; but this I postpone. At present I recommend to you, as a proper Conclusion of this Lecture, to be very cautious how you lend an Ear to those, who would corrupt your Faith: There are many in these days, and there have been many from the first preaching of Christianity, *who would turn aside, if it were possible, the very elect*: beware of them, and *hold fast the Profession of your Faith without wavering*. Your Belief, or Creed, is the *Form of sound words delivered to the Saints*: Whenever you repeat it therefore, beg of God to *continue you in This Faith*: and I cannot recommend to you a better Form than that, which the Father of the Child, who had a dumb Spirit, made use of, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine Unbelief.*

L E C-



L E C T U R E III.

WE are now advanced to the Third thing promised in our Names at Baptism, namely, *that we should keep God's Holy Will and Commandments*. These Commandments are, in Number, Ten, as set forth in the 20th Ch. of Exodus (a), and may either be considered as contained in *Two Tables*, in the Form they were delivered to *Moses* (b), or as they have *Two principal Objects*; our Duty towards God, and our Duty towards our Neighbour. The First Table, or the four first Commandments, relate to God; and the Second, or remaining Six, to our Neighbour (c).

They were delivered to *Moses*, and from him to the Children of Israel; but they are full as binding to us; because they are of a *moral Nature*: whatever is

E such,

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such, whether the Precept of an Heathen, or the Religion of a Jew, our Saviour *came not to destroy, but to fulfil.*

The First of these Commandments comprehends these Two Doctrines; *that there is a God, and that there is but One.*

*That there is a God,* is manifest from the Light of Nature. The Beauty, the Order, the Harmony, the great Wisdom in accommodating every thing to Itself, and others; with irresistible force make us see, and acknowledge, this Truth.— *That there is but One,* appears from that Simplicity, and Uniformity, of Design which are manifest throughout his Works.— But we need not trust to the Light of Nature, and Reason; for, although These would satisfy most Minds, Revelation must satisfy all. To your *Bible* I send you, better far than all other Oracles; hear That, and it will tell you *We are all his Offspring.* And that *the Lord, He is God, and there is none beside him.*

This

This Commandment therefore forbids all Idolatry, confines our Worship to the true God, and as it condemns the Atheist, who believes or pretends to believe, in none, so it condemns those who worship more than one. Of this kind are all those, who, like Antient Rome, fall down to the stock of a Tree, and those, who, like Modern Rome, worship Saints and Angels, the Virgin Mary, and Relicks. In this View of the Commandment, We, who are Protestants, that is, we, who are of the reformed Church, and broken loose from the Errors and Corruptions of Popery, are but little concerned. But there is the *Spirit*, as well as the *Letter*; and every one of us should consider, whether this our Belief has been, and is, succeeded by a suitable Practice. It may be, I have not disbelieved the being of God;— I have not paid Adoration to any other.— But have I paid due Adoration to Him? Have I served, have I worshipped, have I loved, that One? Have I done it with all my heart, and with all my mind, with

all my soul, and with all my strength? Have I not suffered the pleasures of the World to step in between Him and Me? Have I not trusted in Man for defence, or set aside my Maker to pay Court to Him? Have I not been more afraid to lose a Great Man's Favour than His; and rashly adventured to make what I knew to be my Duty give place to Interest? Have I never robbed him of his due Honour, and, flushed with Success, been tempted to think, and rash enough almost to say, *by My Strength, and by the Power of My hands, have I done this?*

All These and more Reflections arise from this Commandment, and shew plainly, that merely to believe there is a God, while that Belief operates not on our Practice, leaves us little better than Atheists, is not half of what is required, and therefore cannot possibly save us.

As the First Commandment prohibits the Worship of any *false* God, the Design

of the Second is to prevent our worshipping the *true* in a wrong, and improper, manner. God is a Spirit, and they, who worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth. All Representations of him by sensible Objects derogate from His Nature, and debase Our's. But in this respect also we Protestants are not, at first View, concerned. I pass it by therefore to make room for one or two Observations. There are several Passages in this Commandment, which are generally misunderstood, and these I shall endeavour to explain.

The First of them is, *I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.* By this we are not to understand that kind of Jealousy, which we see in earthly Princes: In them it arises from a Possibility that their Authority may suffer Diminution. But this cannot be the case with God; we cannot profit, nor hurt him; and therefore, in that Sense, he cannot be said, to be jealous. No, he is jealous for our sakes,

not his own: jealous least, as Idolatry naturally leads to other, and many Immoralities, withdraws us from true Virtue and Holiness, and betrays us into vile Superstitions; by giving the Honour, due to him, to graven Images and other Misrepresentations, to Pictures and Relicks, we should have our Notions corrupted, and our Wills and Affections diverted from the best, and noblest, to the worst, and most unworthy, of all Objects.

The next Expression, that seems to need Explanation, is this, *Visiting the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation.* This appears, at first, irreconcileable with our Notions of God, of whom we cannot help conceiving Ideas of infinite Justice, and infinite Mercy: and again, it is directly contradictory to his own Declarations. (See Ezek. Ch. 18.) To remove therefore the wrong Impressions, which this possibly may have made upon weak and illiterate persons, I must desire you to observe, that  
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the Sentence is not compleat unless you add, *of them that hate me*, or as it is in the original, *of them hating me*, continuing, that is, in their Fathers Sins, hating, despising, and disobeying me, as they did. If Children do this, they are justly obnoxious to their Fathers Punishment; but when they act otherwise, they will not suffer for their Fathers Sins, but be visited for their own only: agreeably to what we read in the Prophet above cited, and particularly in these Words, *The Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father, neither shall the Father bear the Iniquity of the Son: the Soul that sinneth, It shall die.*

This clears up the Sense of these Passages, and prepares us to receive, and really, on the next following; *Shewing mercy unto thousands in them that love me, and keep my Commandments.* — What an amiable Impression doth this leave upon us, and what an Idea doth it give of the divine Goodness, and Mercy, which, while his Justice extends in punishing no farther

than the third or fourth generation,  
protracts itself in blessing to Thousands!

This, I think, is all that need be said upon this Commandment, unless it be to propose to Ourselves a few sober Questions. As for Instance. It is true, I do not represent God under sensible Images, and so far I transgresſ not this Commandment: but have I not formed wrong, and unbecoming, Conceptions of him? — If I have not, farther than from the Nature of a finite Being I could not avoid, have I behaved towards him agreeably to my Conceptions? — Do I always act as conscious that I stand in his sight, and like one persuaded that the wicked are an Abomination to him, and the righteous only his Delight? — Do I approach him with reverence both in public and private? — Have I, in all places, and at all Hours, an awful Sense of his Majesty, and is it the Study, and Ambition, of my Life to recommend my self to Him?

These,

These, and many such, Reflections will arise to us, when we consider the Second Commandment in its due Latitude, but they must, in great measure, be left to Ourselves. I proceed therefore to explain to you the *Third*.

This is intended to preserve in our Minds a constant reverence for our Maker; so that, after we have been taught to acknowledge him to be God, and worship him in a right manner, we should never mention his holy Name without honour: We must esteem it sacred, and religiously abstain from all Abuse, and Profanation, of it (f).

The first of these is, prostituting it to the purposes of Deceit; the most flagrant of which is Perjury: — the next is, rash swearing in common conversation, carelessly and wantonly invoking the great God of Heaven, upon any light and trivial Occasion. — A third is, Swearing by other things or Persons without mentioning

ing Him. This many look upon to be innocent; but I would have them observe two Truths; the one is, that by this Cautiousness it is plain they can forbear swearing, if they will; the other is, that swearing by any Creature is virtually swearing by the Creator; this our blessed Saviour was pleased to declare, and to explain upon the Mount; *Who so sweareth by the Altar, sweareth by it, and all things thereon; and who so sweareth by the Temple, sweareth by it, and by him who dwelleth therein: And he that shall swear by Heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him who sitteth thereon.* And therefore he gives us this Commandment, *Swear not at all.*

Next to Swearing is prohibited that common, but diabolical, sin of Cursing: and let him, who is addicted to it, recollect the following passages; let him look into them as he would into a Glass; he will see his own Features in both: *he loveth not blessing, therefore shall it be far from him; his delight is in cursing, and it shall happen*

*happen unto him ; It shall be even as the Girdle that he is alway girded withal.* That is, the Curse of God shall fall upon him, shall never depart from his house, but shall constantly pursue him to the end of this Life, and in that which is to come.

The next thing forbidden, in the third Commandment, is *profane, and blasphemous Talking.* Many men, who dare not be wicked in Deed, are abominably so in what they speak: but let all such remember what the Scripture tells them; *by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.* Let them hear farther what the Evangelist says, *Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of Judgment.* — And if this be true, what must They expect, who take every opportunity to ridicule God, and Religion, to the scandal of all sober Christians, and indeed, of common Sense!

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*The making rash Imprecations and Vows is another breach of this Commandment. Whoever is guilty of this must be convinced that he prays for, or vows, either what is false, or unlawful; or what is vain, and unprofitable. He, who is guilty of the first of these, does the greatest Despite to God and Religion: he besides breaks in upon prior and unalterable obligations not to do, or wish done, the things he vows to do, or prays for: And he who commits the latter, vows, or prays, out of meer wantonness: that is, he makes God a Party in a matter so trifling, that, were he to take the same liberty with a fellow-Creature, he would be chastised for it. Shameful, thus to offend our Maker, our Redeemer, and our Judge; while we are kept in awe by one another, by a Man that is a Worm, and the Son of Man that is a Worm!*

But if none of these considerations will deter him, let him take warning by the example of *Jephtha*, who, by the rashness of

of his Vow, doomed his Daughter to Death, and himself to a Life of Misery. Let him also not forget the Jews, who, by their Imprecation before the condemnation of the blessed Jesus, when Pilate washed his Hands, and declared himself innocent of his Blood, cried out, *his Blood be on us, and on our Children.* It fell on them, and their posterity, and to this hour visibly pursues them with unremitting severity.

I go on to the Fourth Commandment, which is, *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath Day (g).*

Of the Morality, and consequently of our Obligation to observe this Precept, you must needs be convinced: for, although the appointment of One day in Seven, or of any particular day in preference to another, is merely arbitrary, to be changed as Times, Circumstances, and Occasions, shall require, or as it shall please the original Institutor to vary them, yet,

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yet, the Nature of it is Moral, the duties it requires Moral, and every Man, at every Age, and in every place, is bound to obey it.

At its first Institution it was given to the Jews, but the Intention of it is the same now as it was before Christianity; namely, to serve and worship God, to benefit ourselves and others in the noblest Instances, and to make all Creatures happy and at rest with Mankind. The only Difference between the Jewish and the Christian Sabbath is in the Day, on which it is celebrated. The Jews consecrated to it the Seventh Day of the week, in commemoration of God's resting from his works (*k*). And we set apart for it the First, in remembrance of the Resurrection of Christ on that Day (*l*). But this alters not the Moral Nature of it; that continues the same with respect both to us, and them. This is very evident, and the Utility and Advantages of it will soon be as much so.

Such,

Such, and so great, are the Utility and Advantages of this Institution, that our Creator, in injoining it, gave the greatest Instance of universal Benevolence. For has he not by this means provided, that amidst the fatigues both of Mind and Body, which we all in some shape experience, there should be Time for Relaxation, a proper Suspence of Labour, and a necessary recreation given to our wearied Faculties ? To think, and to be wakeful, is needful ; to sleep, and lay aside Thoughtfulness, is so too : see a Man deprived of this, and you see an injured Machine ; keep the Mind too long intent, and you find a Mad-man, or Ideot : on the contrary, indulge him too long in Indolence, and he will be enfeebled, and hurt. In no Instance therefore are the Goodness and Wisdom of God more apparent than in commanding the Sabbath, in which as much Rest is required as is necessary for every good purpose, and not enough for a bad one.

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Neither

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Neither is this confined to *Mankind*, but is extended even to *Brutes*, all such I mean as are employed in our immediate Service. It is no fanciful Conceit, nor any Affectation of studied Refinement, to say that These, if deprived of reasonable respite from Labour, would much sooner decay, and sink in value; every one upon Experience finds, that to be a good Master to them, is to be a good Steward to himself.

But this is not all the Intention of God in this precept: he means to teach us Mercy even to Brutes, and that, though we have a right to use the Creatures, we ought not to abuse them. And sure it goes farther, and tells us that if even These, which in pride we look upon as made and fed only for us; if these are intitled to so much Compassion, it is still more out of Character, and a much greater Offence, to deny it to those whose Nature is the same with our own, and who, for

for the Offices they perform under us, and from whom we derive half our Enjoyments, have a right to our Gratitude.

These are reasons, that both We, and our Cattle, should rest one day in seven: but there are others beside, and of a kind so interesting, that, I hope, it will be sufficient to name them. The first is, that unless we retire, on the Sabbath, from the Business, the Hurries, the Pleasures, and Impertinences, of this Life, we have no time to think of, and prepare for, the next. It is with our Spiritual, as it is with our Worldly, Concerns: if the man of Trade does not now and then take account of his Stock, examine, and set down, his Dealings, compute his Losses, and his Gains, correct past Mistakes, and think upon a Scheme to prevent future; the most inconsiderate man living will tell you, he will surely be ruined. The same is requisite in our Spiritual Concerns, but this cannot be done every day, indeed it can then only be done, when we have no

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other Business, and all around, in like manner, engaged with themselves, leave us disengaged and at Leisure.

If Sundays therefore are to be Seasons of Rest, and such excellent purposes are intended to be served by them, it behoves us to employ this Rest so, as best may answer these purposes. We are therefore to keep the Sabbath holy, we are to rest, but it is from the Business of our ordinary Callings, in order to perform greater, and more essential, Duties: These are to recollect ourselves, and our Prospects, and cultivate an Acquaintance with the perfectest Being; to praise him, to thank him, to pray to him, both in public and private, to converse with good Men, and good Books; to shew ourselves the Disciples of Christ, by loving those whom he loved, and manifesting our Gratitude to him, by making them happy.

But this is not all. Thou thyself art enjoined this, and so are *thy Son and thy Daughter*,

*Daughter, thy Man-Servant, and thy Maid-Servant, and the Stranger within thy Gates.* All Parents and Guardians; all Masters of Families, or Schools; all who have Influence from their Professions, Office, Situation, or Interest, must not only perform these Duties themselves, but must endeavour to make others do the same. Nor let them despair of Success in it; only let them take care to set the Example, and they will soon see it followed, at least within their own Gates.

I should now proceed to the Second Table, or that part of the Commandments, which contains our Duty to our Neighbour, but this I shall wave, while I set before you a Review of a Sunday, as it is usually observed, to our shame be it spoken, in this Christian Country. Some are idly sauntering in the Fields; Others, which is most amazing Impudence, in the Streets, in the very Avenues to the House of God: Some are drinking at Alehouses, and perhaps, because that is not bad

enough, gaming: Some are on the Road, taking Journeys, which are not necessary, and might as well be postponed: Others, in defiance of all Laws, human, as well as divine, exercising their Trades, or locked up in shameful Commerce with Mammon, and saying unto it, *Thou art my God.*

To check this in Ourselves and Others, let us not forget, that the Sabbath is observed in remembrance of our Saviour's Resurrection; that His Resurrection is the forerunner and Assurance of Ours; and that the State, which shall commence from that Instant, will be happy or miserable, as we ourselves shall make it, by our Behaviour in this World. It may be most glorious; but in our road towards it, we have many Opponents, many Frailities and bad Tendencies, that arise from Ourselves; and many Impediments, which we meet with from Others: great Care, and great Caution therefore are requisite, and it behoves us much to remember

member that, since it is not possible to be always on our Guard, the place of Safety, is the place of Retirement: One half of our Difficulties we by this may surmount; we baffle Temptations by keeping out of their way, and when we must come in sight of them, we meet them armed and forewarned. But do we thus attack them, or do they thus attack us, when we neither estimate their Strength, nor ours; when we will not give ourselves time to prepare for them; when we neither suspect danger Abroad, nor seek the friendly shelter at Home? He, who religiously keeps the Sabbath, will be sheltered at Home, and such Resolution, such Armour, will arise to him thence, that, when the Avocations of Business call him Abroad, he will find his Feet to tread sure; the Impressions of Religion will be a Match for the World, and the Seventh day a security to the rest of the Week.

70 *Of the First Table, &c.*

I might now proceed to shew the Consequences of neglecting this Duty, but I am prevented in it by your own Reflections. Is it not the Confession of half you see ruined: Is it not lamented by all you see executed, that they first forsook the Church on the Sabbath, and that then — *God forsook Them?*

L E C-

L E C T U R E IV.

**I** Now proceed to explain *the Second Table of the Commandments*. This contains our duty towards our Neighbour, and sets out with *Honour thy Father, and thy Mother (a)*.

Here it is to be observed, That the Commandment begins where Nature itself does: For although Christianity doth inspire a *general Love*, and Goodwill, nay, has bidden us *to honour all Men*, yet it doth not in the least abate of that kind of Honour, which we pay our Parents, above all others: they deserve, and justly claim, it most. For this Reason it stands the First in this Table. Another is, because it has a Reward annexed to it, which none other has, namely, That thy days may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. A third is, because there is something as it were

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divine in the Object of it: for whereas, not to commit Murder, Theft, Adultery; not to bear false Witness, nor to covet, is said to be *virtuous*, to honour and obey our Parents is styled *pious*. A fourth is, because obedience to this Commandment includes Obedience to many others, for, from hence we learn, and are naturally led, to apply it to other Relations, and to found in It the Basis of Government itself.

This being premised, I will next consider, how far the Obligation of this Commandment extends. And first, to honour our Father, and Mother, requires of us to make them suitable returns of Love, and Assistance, to respect their Authority over us, and to submit to it; to have in remembrance what they have done and felt for us; that to their Care, under God, we owe our Preservation in Childhood, our Maintenance, and Support, in Youth, our Education and Establishment in Life; that, by their Instructions we have been guarded

guarded from Wickedness, by their Wisdom from Folly ; by their Labour from Want, and by their Indulgence from Pain : In short, that to them we are indebted for most of our present enjoyments, and for our capacity to increase and enlarge them. One principal Design of the Commandment is, to make us grateful ; to make us study to give them as little Pain, and as much Pleasure, as we can ; to be a Comfort, and a Stay, and a Credit, to them. He can never be said to obey this Commandment, who either brings down their grey Hairs with Sorrow, or does not rock their Cradle in Age. In their declining Age we must support them, in their Necessities relieve them, in their Sickness cherish them, in their Lives bless them, as they have blessed us, and in their Graves weep over them.

And, what if it should be the hard Fate of some to meet with Parents, who neglect their duty to them, this cannot cancel their's ; we must submit not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward :

foward. By this and this only we may hope, that our days will be long, and that our Piety will return home to Ourselves: Experience will encourage us in the Expectation: for, how few undutiful Children become happy Parents, and how few are unhappy Parents, who were dutiful Children!

But this Commandment is not confined to our Natural Parents; it extends to many other Relations, such as the King, who is the common Father of his Country: We are therefore to honour him, to serve him, and humbly obey him. It requires in the next place Submission to Magistrates, to the Ministers of God's Word and Sacraments, to Guardians, and Masters. Farther, it requires it towards all our Betters, and challenges Reverence to the aged, Veneration to the wise and prudent; Respect and Deference to the rich and powerful, but more especially towards those, in whatever state they are placed, that excel us in Virtue, and set good Examples.

The

The next Commandment is, *Thou shalt do no Murder?* The first and principal Breach of this is, wilfully destroying the Life of another: and it is forbidden, first, because it is committing a Robbery upon God, and taking away by Force, what he only has a right to dispose of: and Secondly, because it is depriving another of the most valuable of human Possessions. For these reasons, as well as on Account of the Injury, which Society receives in losing one of its Members, we find that God allowed no satisfaction for the Life of a Murderer: Other Crimes might be commuted for by Sacrifice and Retribution; other Offenders might lay hold on the *Altar*, but the Murderer could be taken from thence (See Exod. Ch. 21.)— By the Law of Nations too he was adjudged worthy of the greatest Punishment, no less than Life for a Life. And thus we find that, when the Viper fastened on the hand of St. *Paul*, upon his coming ashore at *Melita*, the Barbarians instantly concluded, *that no doubt he was a Murderer*,

*whom though he had escaped the Sea, yet Vengeance suffered not to live.*

Next to the Murder of another, is forbidden *Self-Murder*: the Guilt of which arises from some of the Circumstances above mentioned; namely, no one has a right to anticipate the Call of God, or dispose of his Gift: and again, no one is at liberty to withdraw himself from his Family, his Relations, his Neighbour, nor, indeed, from the Public; all which are intitled to his Help and Assistance, and have an Interest, and a Right, in his Life.

Thus far the Commandment is founded in Morality, and the common Sense of Mankind, and the Letter of it marks the Extent of it. But Christianity carries it farther, and we transgress it, though in a less, yet in a very culpable, degree, whenever we injure, or give pain, to another Man's Person; whenever we tempt him to excesses, that impair his Health, and shorten

shorten his Life ; whenever we indulge in Luxury, and shorten our own. In brief, whenever we transgress the bounds of Temperance, and use not all possible means to protect, preserve, and lengthen out, both our own Life, and the Life of our Neighbour.

Thus much for the Sixth Commandment. The next is, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery (c)*. The Crime here forbidden was punished, even by Heathens, with Death ; and no wonder ; for next to Murder this is the greatest Injury we can do another. And as in Murder the Injury is not confined meerly to the Object, but spreads itself far and wide, so Adultery draws along with it an horrid Train of Evils. It separates the nearest Relations, destroys all Connexions, and the best of Friendships, lays the Foundation of inextricable Confusions, implacable Dissensions, occasions Murders, and the most tragical Events, and poisons all that Confidence in a genuine Issue, which  
animates

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animates our Endeavours to provide for it. Nor is this an Evil of a private Nature; it destroys that sacred Cement that links us together in Amity, and is the very Soul of Society. The Adulterer therefore is not an Enemy to one Man, or two Men, but to Mankind in general: For this reason it is that, by the *Law of Moses*, both the Adulterer and Adulteress were sentenced to Death: and hence it comes to pass that, in *the Gospel*, it is positively declared that *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.* — *That the Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of Judgement, but chiefly them that walk after the Flesh in the Lust of Uncleanness.* — *That because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon Mankind.* — And again, that *no Whoremonger, nor unclean person, hath any Inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God.* And the Apostle repeats it with great Earnestness and Solemnity, *of the which I tell you before as I have also told you in time past, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

But,

But, as in the preceding Commandment, many lesser Crimes are prohibited, besides the capital one, which is Murder, so in this many are forbidden, besides Adultery. *Ye have heard, said our Saviour, that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not commit Adultery: but I say unto you, whosoever looketh upon a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her in his heart.* We must therefore watch, and correct, our very Inclinations to this Vice, as the only Means to preserve us from lesser Acts of Incontinence; for these also are forbidden, as well as the other. These are base and beastly; occasion Sicknes, and Infirmitie; entail diseases on an innocent Posterity, and are certain instruments to bring us to Poverty and Disgrace. Take heed therefore how you indulge a loose Desire, how you suffer it to stay a Moment with you: think not you may trifle with Virtue; the Transition to Vice is easy; the Partition between them not so strong as you think it. Again, as your Thoughts should be modest, so should

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should your Words ; remember that *your Bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost*, and your greatest glory to keep them pure, and under Subjection ; remember also, that *for every idle word ye must give an Account* : And these, together, will teach you to walk honestly, as in the Day, not in Chambering, and Wantonness ; but, laying aside Naughtiness and filthy speaking, possess your Vessel in Sanctification and Honour.

The Eighth Commandment is, *Thou shalt not steal (d)*. The first thing forbidden in this Commandment is, robbing by Violence. This, by the Law of Nations, is infamous, and to be punished with Death. The next is, stealing by Fraud and Secrecy : and the reason for prohibiting Both is, that were they universally practiced, there could be no Property, no Security, no Encouragement to honest Industry, no Peace, but the world would be a scene of general Rapine, Plunder and Distress. Here also, as in other

other Commandments, the Prohibition extends to diverse Offences which branch from the capital one, partake of its Nature, and will share in its punishment. Such are, using false Weights, and Measures ; over-reaching in Bargains ; taking advantage of the Ignorance, the Foible, or Necessities, of Others : Such also is, withholding from another what is justly his due, though what he cannot legally recover ; neglecting to pay our just Debts, or contracting more than we can reasonably hope to discharge. He, who offends in any of these particulars, steals ; and so does he who, though he avoids transgressing the meer Letter of the Law, acts not up to the Spirit, and Intention, of it : the Intention of it is, that *with the same Measure we would have our Neighbour mete to us, we mete to him* ; that we guard and protect his property, as we would have our own be protected, and, if we have formerly injured it, that we make Retribution. All this is included in the Commandment : *let him therefore who stole,*

**G** *steal*

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*steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.* The Man who, from fear of Poverty, or, which is oftener the Case, from reluctance to Industry, suffers himself to be drawn into Theft, is sure to meet with Shame and Punishment here, and never will arrive at that *New Heaven and New Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness.*

The Ninth Commandment is, *Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour (e).* This cannot be transgressed in the first and capital Sense without Perjury, the sinfulness of which was shewn in the preceding Lecture; the Commandment therefore seems to intend, and prevent, a Crime different from that. Indeed it means, after the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth have guarded the *Life, and Property of our Neighbour*, to preserve, in the next place, *his Reputation*. Next to our Life and Property, this is our most valuable

valuable possession; if our Life depends not upon it, our Property oftentimes does, but where there is a due Sense of Honour, this is even dearer than Life: he therefore, who designedly blasts another's good name, commits an Act of Cruelty, as well as Injustice; and the Criminality of it is increased by this Circumstance, that he hurts another, at the same time he doth not serve himself by it: It is the Act of the Devil, *the grand Accuser*, as his Name signifies, and therefore it is very sinful, with regard to *our Neighbour*. With regard to *God*, It is assuming his Province: *who art thou, that judgest another's servant? to his proper Master he standeth or falleth.* We are not to condemn where the Judgment is God's, nor pass a Censure on others, till we have Authority for it. But what do we, when in private or public? we indulge in Slander and Backbiting; in Whisperings, and Misrepresentations, in evil Surmisings and Ridicule? Is this Christian think ye? Is it even Moral? No, it is neither of them.

Let us not pretend to Humanity; that is too good-natured to do it. — Let us not pretend to Religion; that detests it. — Let us not pretend to Good-breeding; that would blush at it. — Let us not pretend to Wit; true Wit is above it. 'Tis Tinsel, 'tis Trash; 'tis a Littleness of Soul; 'tis a badness and depravity of Heart; and yet it poisons every Conversation. For our own sakes let us put it away from us, we are not safe while this Spirit is abroad; we can have no Friendships, we can have no Neighbourhood; we can have no Peace.

Here some perhaps will ask, although I may not say what is *false* of my Neighbour, may I not speak what is *true*? No, you are not to do that, if that be against him: If you require of me, why you may not, I answer, because Charity, and this Commandment, forbid it. Charity is *kind*, it *thinketh no Evil*, much less doth it speak it: on the contrary, it *covereth a Multitude of Sins*. These are the Reasons that in the Levitical Law Moses enacted, that *none should go up and down as a Tale-bearer*:

bearer: And that our blessed Saviour gave us in charge, *to judge not, that we be not judged.* Let us learn therefore, *to set a watch before our Mouth, and to keep the Door of our Lips; to take heed to our Ways, that we offend not with our Tongue:* and to have imprinted on our Memories, what the Apostle says, *By thy Words thou shalt be justified, and by thy Words thou shalt be condemned.*

Thus much for the Ninth Commandment. The Tenth is given to inforce our Obedience to all the rest of this Table (f). It goes to the bottom, and begins, where all evil Actions begin, at the Heart. In order to prevent such Actions, it corrects the Passions and Appetites, the first Motives and Inclinations towards them: without this Human Nature is too corrupt and irresolute to withstand Temptations. If a Man will suffer himself to be governed by Hatred, and a Thirst for Revenge, he will soon be guilty of Murder, notwithstanding a Law

to the contrary: — if he will fan his Lust and forbidden Desires, from committing Adultery in his Heart, he will commit it in Fact. — if he covets the property of his Neighbour, he will by and by steal it. — If he views with envious Eyes his Estimation in Life, he will sacrifice Truth, and every thing virtuous, to detract from it. But let him once learn the Art of Contentment, and that noble Mastery over himself, which distinguishes Human Kind from the Brutes, and is our best and most eminent Character, and he will have no such Temptations. This in general, shews the Reasonableness, and Excellence, of this Commandment. With regard to Particulars, it is calculated to promote the happiness both of our Neighbour, and Ourselves: of our Neighbour, because, while we neither covet his Property, his Reputation, or Pleasures, we shall not endeavour to deprive him of any one of them: Of Ourselves, because it will rid us of the most uneasy situation we can be placed in,

in, a situation we resolve to dislike: yet this is the situation of all who harbour the Monster Envy, draw inviduous comparisons between what is, and what might have been, and for Happiness look beyond Home.

The Folly of this, one would think, would be sufficient to preserve us from coveting, but if this cannot, the Sinfulness of it must. And can it but be sinful, as it is repining at Providence, and saying, Others have too much, while we have too little? Is it not to put ourselves into the place of the Almighty, and to suppose that we see as far into the Reason, and Justice, of things, our own Nature, and the Nature of Others, as he does, who is infinite in Wisdom? Is it not, in the last place, the highest Ingratitude? For who is there that liveth, and doth not receive many Blessings in this Life, which he doth not deserve, nor could procure for himself? *Are they not all of God, are they not all his Boon who giveth freely all things, and upbraideth not?*

I have now gone through the Commandments, and, I am sure I may affirm, *they are none of them grievous*. On the contrary, they are like every other thing which is required, or forbidden, by Christ, reasonable in themselves, pleasant in the performance, and productive both of publick and private Felicity. Very rightly therefore doth our Church teach us to beg of God *to write all these his Laws in our Hearts*. What they are I have endeavoured to explain, but you cannot wish to have a better Summary of them than that, which is prepared for you in the Answers to these two Questions, viz. *What is thy duty towards God? (g).* And *what is thy duty towards thy Neighbour? (h).* And, I persuade myself, you will want no Incitement to peruse them frequently, when I add, that he, who will consider them with Attention, cannot possibly be ignorant of his Duty to either of these Objects. To them therefore I must now leave you, and proceed, in the Course of these Lectures, to explain the *Lord's Prayer*.

L E C-

L E C T U R E V.

WE have now gone through the several parts of the Christian Covenant, what is engaged for on the side of God, and what on Our's; have seen what it is to be made *a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven: and farther, what it is to renounce, the Devil and all his Works, the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh; to believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, and to keep God's holy Will and Commandments.* And now it rightly follows, that we beg of God to enable us to perform these Duties. But first, the Catechist informs the young Christian, that *he is not able to do these things of himself, nor to walk in the Commandments of God, and to serve him, without his Grace; which Grace, he tells him, he must learn at all times to call for by diligent*

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*diligent Prayer* ; and then bids him say the *Lord's Prayer*.

And here it is necessary, as St. *Paul* says, that *we pray with the Understanding*, and that every one, who makes use of the several petitions contained in it, should know the Sense and Intention of them ; for otherwise, our Prayer is meer Jargon, and, instead of an acceptable Service, becomes Abomination.

I proceed therefore to explain these Petitions. But first, it may be of use to make one or two Observations.

*Prayer* is a Duty founded in Nature. We feel a thousand Wants, and Infirmities : We find ourselves unable to supply, and correct them ; yet they are supplied and corrected. This makes us look up to the Fountain of all Goodness and Power ; and, at the same time it shews us, whom we are to praise for past Mercies, whom we are to pray to, for future.

Secondly,

Secondly, as to the *Matter of our Prayers*. There is nothing requires our Deliberation more than this. We know not what to pray for: many things we take to be Blessings, which are in themselves, and in their end, Curses: many we apprehend to be innocent, which are really criminal, Others there are which, though indifferent to good and evil, are yet improper Objects of our Wishes: and lastly, there are some we are inclined to ask, although we know them to be such. But our blessed Saviour has prevented us, in all these Instances, and given us a Directory, that points out to us, both what we should pray for, and what we should not pray for.

But, supposing us right in the *Matter of our Prayers*, we may nevertheless err in the *Manner* of them. We may, like the Scribes and Pharisees, make longer prayers than are decent, as if Heaven could be won by the Length of them: Or, like some who dissent from us, disdain

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dain to be confined to any *set Form*, and run into extempore Effusions ; as if we may approach our Maker without Ceremony, and, although we labour an Address to an earthly Prince, may neglect the Manner in which we address God. But this too our blessed Saviour has guarded against, by furnishing us with proper Instructions, *How*, as well as *for what*, we should pray. And therefore, as the Disciple did wisely, when he besought him in these Words, *Lord, teach us to pray*, so shall we do well to observe his Directions, when he replied, *After this Manner pray ye.*

I proceed therefore to explain the several Petitions in the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer, so called, because it was composed by him for the Use of his Disciples, begins thus, *Our Father which art in Heaven*. And hereby it directs us to the true and only Object of our Devotion, from the Sun, and Moon, and all the host of heavenly Bodies, from Stocks, and Stones,

Stones, from Saints and Angels to Him, who created them all, whose Servants they are, to God, the Father Almighty.

It reminds us, Secondly, That he is our *Father*, the origin of our Being, the protector and preserver of it; the Supply of our Wants, our help in distress, our support in trouble, our friend, and all-gracious Benefactor. This Consideration fills us with Gratitude, and the next with Awe: for who can address this universal Father, and not recollect the infinite distance between Him, and the greatest of Mortals? who, but must think humbly of himself, and consider that he is but Dust and Ashes? that God is in Heaven, and He upon Earth? That therefore all the devotion, he can possibly express in his Words and Actions, all the Reverence, he can shew in bodily worship, is due to him: that he is to approach him humbly, petition him on his Knees, and call forth every power of Soul and Body in his Service?

It

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It reminds us, farther, of that Place, to which we all aspire; to have our Conversation in Heaven; to separate ourselves, far as may be, from the things of this Life, and set our Affections upon things above.

The First petition in the Lord's Prayer, thus understood, very naturally introduces the Second, *Hallowed be thy Name*. A due reflection on what went before will lead to this: for who can look up to God, and consider him as that benevolent, and beneficent Being, from whom we receive all we enjoy at present, and all we wish, and humbly hope for, hereafter; as the Lord of Heaven, where he sits throned, in Majesty, and receives continual praises from innumerable Angels and Archangels, but must wish to join in their *Hal-  
lelujahs*? — Join with them *hereafter* we shall, and why not join with them *now*? Gladly we catch the sound, and let us waft it to the ends of the Earth: this, and

and this only, can give us a foretaste of future beatitudes, and the more we hallow his holy Name upon Earth, the more we shall rejoice in it, in his glorious kingdom.

And what doth this teach us, but to mention his Name with reverence, to honour Him, and all that relates to him; not to profane the one with swearing and cursing; nor the other with jesting, and light talking; but in all things to approve ourselves the Servants of Him, *whose Name is holy, and holiest of holies, and hallowed throughout the world.*

The next Petition is, *Thy Kingdom come.* After being ourselves convinced of the glory due to God, we charitably pray that all mankind may be the same; and we mean by it, that his Religion may spread over the face of the whole Earth, and that all the kingdoms of the world may become the kingdom of God and his Christ. Whoever therefore offers up this Petition,

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is

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is indispensably required to contribute, all in his power, to this End; by setting forth an example of the christian life, by instructing the ignorant, and reforming the Sinner; by bringing into light those who sit in darkness; converting the Infidel, and untutored Indian; by uniting, if possible, all mankind in Love, bringing all, who dissent from us, into the pale of Christ's Church, and healing the Divisions among its Members: In short, by propagating the Gospel, in its genuine Spirit, both at Home and Abroad; and letting our Zeal in it keep pace with our Connexions, and Conquests.

This is what is primarily signified in the Petition before us, and the next Sense of it is, to use the expression of our Burial Service, that *he would hasten his kingdom*; that so, when the Ends of Christ's Coming shall be fulfilled, and his kingdom on Earth established, *We, and all those who are departed this life, may have our perfect Consummation and Bliss both in Body, and*

*and Soul, in the next; in that eternal kingdom prepared for his Servants from the beginning of the world.*

*Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.* Here we pray, that Our obedience may be like that of the holy Angels. Their obedience is uniform, and absolute. This Our's cannot be, while we are conversant with an artful, and a wicked World, and are as much inferior to them in our Powers, as we are in the Scale of Beings; but in the same Sense, as where our blessed Saviour bids us to *be perfect, even as our heavenly Father is perfect;* so we are to understand this; and we pray, that Our obedience may be as like that of the holy Angels, as our Nature will admit of; that we may serve God *with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, and with all our Strength:* beyond this we cannot go; for if we did, we should cease to be Men, and commence Angels. In like manner, though we cannot be like Him, who is the same yesterday, and to day,

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and for ever; with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of changing; yet we must endeavour after it, as much as is possible; We do not his Will on Earth as it is done in Heaven, while we serve him by Fits and Starts; we must remember that what is our duty this minute, is our duty the next, and to the end of our life; and as no Figure in Nature pleases so much as a Circle, because it is uniform; so nothing recommends us both to God, and all intelligent Beings, so much as an uniform course of acting: It shews we are conducted by Principle, not Caprice; that we do not set up *Baal* against the *Lord*, nor *holt* between Two opinions.

The next Petition is, *Give us this day our daily bread.* This, in the first place, teaches us to moderate our Appetites, and reduce our Desires to an humble standard. *What we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or wherewithal we shall be cloathed,* is the concern of an Heathen, not of a Christian:

*Of the Lord's Prayer.* 99

Christian: these are His Principal goods; they are the least of our's: if these are not in his possession, he knoweth not whence to expect them; we know whence to expect, and are sure to receive them: He that cloatheth the Field, we know, will cloath Us: he that feedeth the Raven, will much more feed Man. This Petition therefore teacheth us to rest on his Providence, which will never fail to bless our honest industry, and to hear us when we pray with *Agur*, *that he would feed us with food convenient for us*, and ask for no more.

It teaches farther, not to extend our Solicitude, and *take thought for the Morrow*; it is enough we provide for to-day; to-morrow will be as to-day. So also it cautions us against all immoderate Desires, tells us not to ask for wealth, or power, or grandeur, *to be cloathed in purple, and fare sumptuously*; but to confine our Petitions to what is necessary for our present health and convenience.

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And

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And further, it reminds us that, so long as God supplies us with these, we have all that is needful. This is not our *resting place*, we are but on the Road: if we have sufficient to make that tolerably comfortable, 'tis well, 'tis enough; we hope *to pass over Jordan*, and there to have *our Milk and Honey*; till then, so long as we have *Manna*, let us be content.

The next thing, we pray for, is, *the Forgiveness of our Sins*. In many things we all offend, (for who is there that liveth and sinneth not?) and who without forgiveness can escape punishment? To obtain this for us, our blessed Saviour came upon Earth, suffered death upon the Cross, and now sitteth at the right hand of God, to make intercession for us. But here we must remember, that we are promised Forgiveness upon two express conditions: the one is, that we truly repent of our Sins: and the other, that we forgive them that sin against us: *Forgive us our trespasses, as, or in the same degree*

gree as, *we forgive them that trespass against us.* There are no two things in all the Scriptures expressed with more clearness, with more force, and, I may add, more frequently than these are: As to the first of them, St. Luke says, *except ye repent ye shall perish:* and as to the other, hear what our Saviour says, in the parable of the unforgiving Servant; *O thou wicked Servant, I forgave thee all thy debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?* Because he had not, his Lord ordered him to be delivered to the Tormentors. And lest we should misunderstand and misapply the parable, he explains it to us thus: *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his Brother their trespasses.*

Of this we are reminded, whenever we repeat this Petition; nay more, we acknowledge the Justice, and the Rectitude

of it, and beg to be forgiven on this very Condition : to do it therefore while in our hearts we treasure up hatred, and a thirst for revenge, is the greatest insult we can offer to God: it is telling him either that he knoweth not what passeth within us; or, that we pay no regard to what he hath been pleased to declare. It is also the greatest Folly with respect to Ourselves : it is effectually to prevent the very good we pray for ; it is desiring, at the same time, that we may not be heard: nay, it is worse, it is praying that we may not be forgiven. If therefore, (for I cannot conclude this better) thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, if either at Church, or in thy Closet, thou wouldest offer up the Lord's Prayer, *and there remembereſt that thy brother bath ought againſt thee, go thy way, firſt be reconciled to thy brother, and then come, and offer thy Prayer.*

But to proceed. *Lead us not into Temptation.* How much we are exposed to temptation, how much we are seduced by evil

evil and corrupt affections within; and by custom, fashion, habit, and examples without, we know by sad Experience: we know also that our *Enemy* is vigilant, *that he walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, and like a Lion lurketh in secret places to murder the innocent.* Many take no pains to withstand him, few of us take much; but suppose we did, we are not sufficient of ourselves, our sufficiency is of God: and therefore to him should we pray, *that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand:* that he would put upon us his whole armour; reflection, fortitude, prudence, temperance, virtue, and piety, the breast-plate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit. If we do this, he will hear us, he hath promised that, *if we resist the Devil, he shall flee from us;* and although he suffer us, for good and wise reasons, to be tempted, he will not do it above that we are able to bear, *but with the temptation he will also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.*

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At all times therefore, and especially when we find ourselves wavering, should we pray, as we are here directed, *lead us not into temptation*; that is, suffer us not to be led into it. For God cannot be tempted, neither tempteth he any Man; but he may, and doth permit others, and especially our own depraved hearts, to do it; and will, till we beseech him to prevent it. Whenever therefore we say, *lead us not into temptation*, we mean, do not judicially, and in Anger, give us up to the power of it.

*But deliver us from Evil.* That is, whenever we are tempted, let it be for our good, and not to our Destruction: let it be to approve us resolute in his Service, determined to oppose the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, rather than Him; to sacrifice the seeming pleasures, and little interests of the World to his Service; to fight a good fight, to finish our Course, however painful it may be, and to come out,

out, like Silver purified in the Fire, the brighter for every Trial.

This we mean, or should mean, whenever we repeat this Petition ; nay more, we beg that God would deliver us from Pain, from Afflictions, and from Evil in general ; but above all, from the greatest, and the most fatal, the evil of Sin in this Life, and the certain unavoidable punishments that, without repentance, will succeed it hereafter.

These are the things we are directed in this Form to pray for ; and these, being explained, enable us to give a proper Answer to the following Question, *What desirest thou of God in this Prayer? (b).*

And now follows, what is called, the Doxology. As Prayer is the consequence of Want, so is Praise the consequence of our want being supplied. Therefore as all of us hourly receive many blessings from God, we should daily add to our Petitions the tribute of our gratafullest Praise. *And in-*

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indeed it is meet, right, and our bounden duty that we should, at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, Almighty, everlasting God! Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the Company of Heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name; evermore praising thee and saying, holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts; Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty: and both in this present State, and in that which through thee we hope to inherit, thine be the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever, and ever.

Thus have I gone through the several Petitions in the Lord's Prayer. At the end of which, as well as of the rest of our Prayers, we say *Amen*, by which we conclude our Requests not only with a Desire to be heard, but to shew also that what comes thus from our Lips, comes first from

from our Hearts; that we have well considered what it is we are asking, and are serious in it. To expatiate on the Excellency of this Composition, its propriety, and perspicuity; its brevity, and yet its comprehensiveness; its benevolence, and great Usefulness, is scarcely to be attempted. I will therefore rather beg of you to use it frequently, at least, every Morning and Evening: You cannot begin, or end the Day better, nor finish Life so well.

To encourage you to do this, I need only add, " that the eternal Son of God, " who was acquainted both with our " InfirmitieS, and their Cure; who knew " both what our Condition prompts us " to ask, and what his Father is willing " to grant: He, by whose Merits we are " redeemed, and through whose Name " only we can expect to be saved, hath " taught us Thus to pray: and since we " offer up this Prayer by his Direction, " we may rest assured, it will be accepted " through his Intercession."

L E C-



L E C T U R E VI.

**I** Am now brought to the Conclusion of the Church Catechism; have explained the *Christian Covenant*, the *Christian Faith*, the *Christian Duties*; and the *Christian Prayer*: so that you have had a summary View of our Religion, and now need only to consider the two principal Ordinances of it. These you have set down in the Answer to the following Question, *How many Sacraments bath Christ ordained in his Church?*

The Jewish Dispensation was loaded with innumerable rites and ceremonies, and imposed a Yoke, which neither the latter Jews, nor their Fathers, were able to bear; but our blessed Saviour has relieved us from it, exchanged it, for an easy and light burthen, and, instead of many principal Ordinances, has commanded but *Two (a)*. These are *Baptism*,  
*and*

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*and the Supper of the Lord (b).* Both these are *Sacraments*; and, in order to understand them as such, it is necessary to enquire what is their Nature, or, in other words, *what does properly constitute a Sacrament, in contradistinction to Rites of an inferior Rank?*

But, before I proceed to this, I judge it necessary to make one or two observations. The first is, that these are said to be *generally necessary to Salvation*. They are *generally necessary to Salvation*, but not *absolutely necessary (c)*: that is, they are such duties as must not be neglected, unless there intervene very great, and insuperable, Obstructions. One of these is, the not having an Opportunity to conform to them; as for Instance, where a Child dies before the Parents can have it baptized. To suppose such a Child to be an Object of displeasure and punishment, when it was never capable of wilful transgression, is to think most unworthily of the Father of Mercies. But, at the

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same time, we must not forget, that to be an Object of *Wrath* is one thing, and to be an Object of *Favour* is another. Every one of the Seed of Adam is under the original Sentence of Death, pronounced, in consequence of his transgression, on all his Descendants: this Sentence God engages to reverse, and to restore the party to Immortality, upon his entering into Covenant with him in Baptism, but he engages for it on no other Terms. For this reason, all Parents should take care to lose no opportunity of having this Sacrament administered to their Children; I do not say that, for want of it, God will not, of meer Grace and Favour, restore the Infant to Life; but strict Justice doth not require it; and if the Benefit be lost to the Infant, it is by the neglect of the Parents: can they answer this to their Child? can they answer it to their Conscience, and will it not appear against them at the day of Judgment?

The Second of these is, *the Lord's Supper*. This too is necessary to Salvation; but

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but it is not so, when we are situated either in a place, where it is not administered at all, as in Heathen Countries; or where it is so administered, that we cannot communicate without Idolatry, as in Popish Countries; or lastly, in the Absence of a Priest.

In all these cases our omission is not wilful, and consequently our Salvation not affected by it.—But where there are no such impediments, all besides, which we substitute for them, the busines of our several callings, the want of Preparation, and the like, are meer wilful Evasions, meer Excuses, and Subterfuges, which add to our Condemnation, instead of preventing it.

The next Observation I would make is, that, when we answer Two only, we declare our dissent from those who make the number of Sacraments greater or less than Two. These are the Quakers, and the Papists; the first of whom allow of no Sa-

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Sacraments at all, and the other maintain  
there are Seven.

That both These are mistaken will appear when we explain the next Question, *What meanest thou by this word Sacrament?* The Answer is, *I mean an outward visible Sign of an inward and spiritual Grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a Means whereby we receive the same, and a Pledge to assure us thereof.*

Before we proceed, it is necessary to premise, that there is a great difference between *Sacraments*, and *other Rites*. Other rites are Badges of our Profession, but a Sacrament is more; In the Old Testament Circumcision, and propitiatory Sacrifices, were of a Nature different from the ritual precepts of Cleansings, Distinction of Days, Places, and Meats: These were indeed Precepts given of God, and therefore were to be observed; yet they were not *federal Acts*, and therefore are subordinate to them; but Sacraments

I are

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are fœderal acts, and consequently of a Nature superior to Rites that are not so (d).

We go on, and say, that to constitute a Sacrament there must be *an Institution of Christ, in which some material thing is sanctified by the use of some Form of Words, in and by which fœderal Acts do pass on both sides* (e).

*Matter* is necessary to a Sacrament; for Words, without Matter, may be of the nature of Prayers, or Vows, but cannot be Sacraments; other Acts of Worship are only acts of the mind declared by Words, or Gestures; but Sacraments are the application of a Material sign joined with the acts of the Mind, which are Words and Gestures. Another requisite is, *a Form*: that is, such Words joined with it as shall appropriate *the Matter to a particular use*: and Lastly, this Use must be *Fœderal*.

This

This is the best Definition of a Sacra-  
ment I can give you. Apply it, in the  
first place, to Baptism, and then, to the  
Lord's Supper.

In *Baptism*, there is an *Institution*: Go,  
and teach all Nations, baptizing them; —  
there is *Matter*, the Water; — there is a  
*Form*, the person dipped or washed: —  
there are *Words*; I baptize thee in the  
Name of the Father, and of the Son, and  
of the Holy Ghost. — And it is a *Cove-  
nant* between God, and Him.

In *the Lord's Supper*, there is an *Institu-  
tion*: This do in remembrance of Me: —  
there is *Matter*, the Bread, and the Wine:  
— there is a *Form*, the eating Bread, and  
drinking Wine: — there are *Words*; take,  
eat, this is my Body; and drink ye all of  
this, for this is my Blood. — And it is a  
foederal act; *ye do hereby shew the Lord's  
death till he come*; — *my Body which is given  
for you*; *my Blood which is shed for you, and  
for many, for the Remission of Sins*.

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Apply this to *Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Marriage, and extreme Unction*, and it will hold good in none of them: so that we do right when, in contradiction to the *Quakers*, we say there are Two Sacraments; and in Contradiction to the *Church of Rome*, that there are but Two.

Our Notions of a Sacrament being thus rightly stated, I proceed to shew first, of what parts a true Sacrament consists. These are two; *the outward, visible Sign; and the inward, spiritual Grace (f)*. The outward visible Sign in the Sacrament of Baptism is, *the Water wherein the Person is baptized (g)*. The outward visible Sign in the Lord's Supper is, *the Bread and Wine (h)*. The inward and spiritual Grace in Baptism is, *a Death unto Sin, and a new Birth unto Righteousness (i)*. The inward part, or thing signified in the other Sacrament is, *the Body and Blood of Christ (k)*. The Benefits of the one are that, from being objects of punishment, we are forgiven, and made the Children of

of God (*l*). The Benefits of the other are, the strengthening and refreshing of our Souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as the natural Body is by Bread and Wine (*m*). This shews the popish doctrine of Transubstantiation to be absurd, and that, when we mention *the Body and Blood of Christ as verily and indeed taken, and received by the faithful, in the Lord's Supper*, we do not mean, that they eat the identical Body and Blood of Christ, but that they are intitled to the Benefits purchased for them by his Incarnation.

This being explained, I go on, and shew, *how or in what Manner the Sacraments operate*: and then, *what is to be done previous to their being administered*.

As to the First of these, little will suffice. *They do not operate as physical Qualities, nor by way of Charms (*n*)*. For the Intention of both Sacraments is to bring us to righteousness: but if meerly being

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baptized, or receiving the Lord's Supper be sufficient, without any thing done before, at, or after, it, this Intention is frustrated; nay, the very Reverse would take place. For who needs be careful to preserve a good Conscience, or disquieted at a guilty one, if the Sacraments can save him, let him act well, or ill? The Scriptures give a very different Account. St. Peter says, that Baptism *saves us*: but how? *not as it is an Action that washes us, not because it putteth away the Filth of the Flesh*; but because it is the Answer of a good Conscience towards God. It is the same with regard to the Lord's Supper; by thus shewing forth the Lord's Death till he come, we are admitted to the Communion of his Body and Blood; that is, to a share, in partnership with other Christians, in the Effects, and Merits, of his Death.—But was it thus with *Judas*? Is it thus with any other unworthy Receiver? No. St. Paul tells us *he is guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ; that he eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself, and must expect, in consequence of his*

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his Crime, to be weak and sickly, and not live out half his days.

This shews we must cooperate with them ; they are the outward visible Signs of an inward, spiritual, Grace ; and ordained by Christ, as the Means by which we receive this Grace ; but they are foederal also, and, at the same time they are pledges to assure us of it, suppose us to perform the conditions required on Our part, as God performs His.

I come, next, to set before you what is required of those who come to them. And first, for Baptism. The Question is, *What is required of persons to be baptized?* The Answer is, *Repentance, whereby they forsake Sin ; and Faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament.* You see that Repentance, and Faith are equally requisite (o).

In what Repentance consists was explained in the First of these Lectures,

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where I treated of Our part of the Covenant, namely, *to renounce the Devil, and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful lusts of the Flesh.* — So also the *Faith*, here required, was represented in the Second, under the *Articles of the Christian Faith*. These rightly understood, and attended to, leave us no room to doubt, or mistrust, the promises of God made to us in Baptism. And therefore nothing remains, but to answer the next question; *Why then are Infants baptized, when by reason of their tender Age they cannot perform them?* that is, cannot perform either Repentance, or *Faith (p).* The Answer is, *because they promise them both by their Sureties; which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform.* They are bound to perform them, as I said in the First Lecture, because the things promised in their Names, are duties of eternal and immutable Obligation, and such as they must needs perform at a riper age, whether any such

such promise had, or had not, been made for them in their Infancy.

The next Question, and the last I shall have Occasion to speak to, is, *What is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper?* — Whoever observes on what passes within him, must be sensible that we are deceived in nothing, and by nothing, more than our own hearts: We are apt to forget those actions of our lives, which we know to be criminal; and again, we are inclined to suppose others innocent, which are really sinful: and, where neither of these is the case, we seldom give ourselves the trouble to recollect, or think at all about them. The Consequence of this is, that we approach the holy Table rashly, without considering the Lord's Body, and so turn the greatest of all spiritual blessings into a snare and Condemnation. — The Catechism therefore tells us, that we must examine ourselves, and so doth St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians; *let a Man examine himself,*

*himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

Nor do our Instructions cease here; we are also told, what should be the particular heads of this Examination. The first of them is, *whether we repent us truly of our former sins*, that is, whether we have so far recollected them, and dwelt upon the malignity of them, their Offensiveness to God and good Men, and the hurt and Injury they have done to our Souls, as to feel an hearty Sorrow and Contrition, and are ashamed of ourselves for having committed them: for till this be the Effect of our Self-Examination, it will profit us nothing.

The next is, *whether we stedfastly purpose to lead a new life*. Meir Sorrow for sin, unaccompanied with resolutions not to repeat it, may deceive ourselves for a while, but it cannot deceive long: if it be genuine, it will not stop here; by its fruits we must know it. It will set out with

with good Resolutions, and proceed to good works ; following the Commandments of God, and walking from thenceforth in his holy ways.

Another is, whether we have a lively Faith in God's Mercy through Christ. Nothing is more expressly declared in holy Scripture, than that we are redeemed by the Mercies and Intercession of Christ : *this is the only name under Heaven by which we can be saved.* God so loved the World, saith St. John, that he gave his only begotten Son, that all who believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting Life. And again, *If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.* This therefore, we must firmly believe, and happy are we in believing it.

But this is not all, we are to have a thankful remembrance of his Death. This naturally follows the other : for who can think of what our blessed Saviour did and suffered

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suffered for him, and not be filled with Gratitude? who can recollect his Death, and not remember that eternal Life and Happiness, which he thereby purchased for him? And who can think of these things seriously, but must triumph in this Reflection, that, *as We are planted in the Likeness of his Death, we shall be planted also in the Likeness of his Resurrection.*

The last thing, required of them who come to the Lord's Supper, is, *to be in charity with all Men.* To approach the Lord's Table with an heart unforgiving, is sure to meet with the Rebuke in the parable, *friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?* We here meet to acknowledge the greatest act of Mercy the World ever received, the Forgiveness of Sins; the greatest Instance of Love that could be exemplified; the Son of God laying down his Life for our sakes. These are the happy Subjects of our Meditations, and Praises: to these we are invited, and in them we perform an acceptable

ceptable Service; but it is on the express Condition, that we *have love one to another*. Here we should mark well the Extent of this Command. *To be in charity with all Men* requires of us, not to circumscribe our Beneficence within the narrow bounds of Affinity, Neighbourhood, Persuasion, or Party; but to imitate the universal Father, who maketh his Sun to rise on all alike. It requires also that, as all Mankind are Objects of our Charity, this Charity should extend to our Wishes, and Prayers; not confined to the Hand, but seated in our Heart and Affections. We must form no rash judgments of other Men's Actions, not represent them with Ill-nature: we must think the best we can of all Men, and pry into no one's defects, except our own: we must relieve the necessitous, console the afflicted; we must rejoice with them who rejoice, and weep with them that weep; at all times we must succour Distress from what Cause soever it springs, and never forget the words

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words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, *It is more blessed to give than to receive (q).*

I have now gone through the Church Catechism, and have, I hope, enabled you to explain it to others: remember therefore the words of the Apostle, *freely ye have received, freely give:* remember also that every Soul, which perisheth through your Neglect, will be required at your hands. The Parent, who suffers his Child to continue in Ignorance, when he might instruct him, will answer for the consequences of that Ignorance; and how soon, and how luxuriantly ill Weeds spring, where the ground is not cultivated, you all know, *Train up a Child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it;* let him be neglected in his earlier years, and he will as long retain Vice. Young Minds are like Wax, capable of any impression, susceptible alike of good, or bad. Therefore begin betimes, and prevent at first, what otherwise you will never efface: be but half as careful

careful to provide for their spiritual Interest, as you are to accumulate for them Wealth and other temporal Goods, and ye will save both yourselves, and them. Sedulously ye rise up early, and but late take rest; no toil fatigues you, no labour is too great, so you can but leave them rich: but what are these *Treasures upon Earth?* *the Moth, and the Rust corrupt them, Thieves break through and steal them.* But, what if they stay with you? will they ease a pain of mind? will they stop a sigh? they may prevent Cold and Nakedness, they may assist a distempered Body, but will they speak peace to the Soul? will they still the Tumults there? will they banish Fear, and Dread, and Guilt? No, without Virtue and Religion they are Nothing. One good principle, you shall instil into your Child, is worth them all. This is a treasure like the Widow's Cruse; this will never fail. Imagine him on a Death-bed, and then see, if he will not thank you more for taking care of his Morals, than for all you have done

done for him beside: and judge ye yourselves, whether it will not give you more joy to see him die a good Christian, than to see him live in riches and splendour, but in a Course of wickedness, that must end in horrid Presages, and, without Repentance, Misery eternal.

But, if yet you wish to leave him possessed of the good things of this Life (for so it seems we must call them) have you not much more reason to hope for their continuing with him, if he be virtuous, than if he be otherwise? A good Man will not expend more than he can afford, because that is hurting others: a good Man is out of the way of many temptations, to which the irreligious are for ever exposed: And, as Sin is ever attended with great expences, scarce any share of worldly acquisitions will be adequate to them: but it is not thus with wise and good Men, and they have yet a much better Security, they have the blessing of God upon them, so that *the Sun shall not burn*

*burn them by day, neither the Moon by night.*

Nor will these Effects of your care extend only to your Children; they will deliver down the same precepts to their's; they will take the same care of them, that you took of your's: They, and You also, will find your Reward in it; perhaps, the best, and greatest, that can be; not the pleasure of a Day, or a Year, or a Life only; but the Reward of these *who turn many to righteousness*: hereafter *ye will shine as the Stars in the Firmament*; at present, you have the satisfaction to reflect, that you have done your duty towards them; that you leave them instructed to do their's to others; that you are hastening to a Land of Peace and Happiness, and that **THEY SHALL SHORTLY FOLLOW.**



## MODE OF EXAMINATION.

### LECTURE I.

What is your name?  
(a) { How many names have you?  
When had you your surname?  
When had you your christian name?  
(b) Why do you call it your christian name?  
(c) What should your christian name remind you of?  
(d) Who gave you this name, and when did they give it?  
(e) What benefits did you gain by being baptized?  
(f) What is it to be a member of Christ?  
(g) What duties are expected from you in return for this benefit?  
(h) What is it to be a child of God?

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(i) What duties, &c. as before?

(k) What is it to be an inheritor of the kingdom of God?

(l) What duties, &c. as before?

(m) What did your godfathers and godmothers do for you in baptism?

(n) { What mean you by the Devil, and all his works?

{ What by the Pomps and Vanities of the world?

{ What by the sinful Lusts of the flesh?

(o) What is the second thing they promised for you?

(p) What is the third?

(q) How long are you to observe and do them?

(r) Do you think you are bound to believe, and to do, as your godfathers and godmothers promised for you? and why?

(s) Why do you say by God's help so I will?

L E C.

L E C T U R E II.

- (a) Where do you find the articles of the christian faith?
- (b) Why do you call it the apostles' creed?
- (c) What use is it of?
- (d) How many parts does it consist of?
- (e) What does the first part relate to?
- (f) What does the second relate to?
- (g) What does the third relate to?
- (h) What are you taught by them all together?

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*Of the First Table of the Commandments.*

L E C T U R E III.

- (a) How many commandments are there, and where do you find them?
- (b) In what form were they originally delivered; and to whom?
- (c) How many of them relate to God, and which are they?

- (c) How many to your neighbour, and which are they?
- (d) What is the first Commandment, and what doth it teach?
- (e) What is the second, and what is its intention?
- (f) What is the third, and what, &c. as before?
- (g) What is the fourth, &c?
- (h) On what day of the week is the Jewish Sabbath? and what did they commemorate in it?
- (i) On what day of the week is the Christian Sabbath, and what do we commemorate in it?

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*Of the Second Table of the Commandments.*

L E C T U R E IV.

- (a) What is the fifth Commandment?
- (b) What is the sixth?
- (c) What is the seventh?
- (d) What is the eighth?

What

- (e) What is the ninth?
- (f) What is the tenth?
- (g) The first four set forth your duty to God. What is it?
- (h) The six last describe your duty to your Neighbour. What is it?

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*Of the Lord's Prayer,*

L E C T U R E V.

- (a) Why do you call it the Lord's Prayer?
- (b) What things do you ask of God when you use it?

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*Of the Two Sacraments.*

L E C T U R E VI.

- (a) How many Sacraments are there?
- (b) Which are they?
- (c) Are they necessary to salvation?
- (d) Wherein do they differ from other rites?

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- (e) How do you define a Sacrament?
- (f) Of how many parts does a Sacrament consist?
- (g) What is the outward form in Baptism?
- (h) What is the outward form in the Lord's Supper?
- (i) What is the inward and spiritual grace in Baptism?
- (k) What is it in the other Sacrament?
- (l) What benefits do we receive from being baptized?
- (m) What are the benefits we receive from the Lord's Supper?
- (n) How do the Sacraments operate?
- (o) What is required of Persons previous to their being baptized?
- (p) What do you mean by *Both*?
- (q) What is required of them who purpose to receive the Lord's Supper?

*N. B.* These questions are not to be put always in the Course in which they here stand, nor in the same Words; for otherwise the evil will remain which is hereby intended to be remedied: but this must be left to the discretion of the Catechist.

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## LECTURE VII.

HAVING explained the Church Catechism so, as to enable every Parent to instruct his Children in it, I think it may be useful to say something of *Confirmation*. I shall therefore set before you, First, *the nature and design of Confirmation*: Secondly, *the reasonableness and utility of it*: Thirdly, *who are the proper Candidates for it*: And lastly, *how they are to behave BEFORE, AT, and AFTER, IT.*

Before I proceed to the first of these, it may not be amiss to premise, that, although in what follows, I am to address myself chiefly to young Persons, they are not the only ones I am concerned with. Many of you are Parents, many of you are Godfathers, Masters, or Guardians; it is your duty therefore to assist me in mine; and it is for that purpose, among others, I lay this before you, that so ye may

may not plead Ignorance, as an excuse for Idleness; nor suppose you are discharged from the care of them, at least, till they have discharged you.

When it is they discharge you, is more difficult to say than you may imagine: for the Church directs every Sponser to take care that the Child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him. But more than this is intended: it is expected that, as he first prepares him for Confirmation, and then sees him confirmed, so he be a witness against him, if in future he doth not perform his Engagements, and remind him of them, upon every gross failure.

This being premised, I proceed to enquire, what is *the Nature, and Design of Confirmation.*

This, I apprehend, may be explained in some such easy manner as this. By the Transgression of our first Parents, which is

is recorded in the Book of Moses, called Genesis, all their descendants forfeited that Immortality which God intended for them, and became miserable, and short-lived, Beings, that were *to eat Bread in the sweat of their brow* for a few years, and then sink into their Graves, and never after exist.

From this dreadful state they were redeemed by the blessed Son of God, who graciously took upon himself to satisfy his offended Father, by being born of a Woman, and dying on a Cross, and so procured for them Admission to a Covenant of Reconciliation with him by Baptism.

In this Covenant certain things are agreed to, both on the side of God, and on the side of Man: God, on his part, vouchsafes to adopt us *as Members of Christ, the Children of God, and Inheritors of his Kingdom of Heaven.* We, on ours, promise, that *we will renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps, and vanities of this wicked*

wicked World, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; that we will believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith; and that we will keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our life.

This is the Covenant between God and Us: but, because at the time of our being baptized, we are unable to understand what passes on either side, our Godfathers and Godmothers, by way of Guardians and Sureties, engage, and in our Names promise, that we shall perform that part of it which belongs to us. This is all the Security we can give in Infancy, and therefore no other is required of us during this period. But, when we come to years of Discretion, the Church expects that we should publickly declare, that we now give our free and voluntary Assent to what was done, and engaged for, in our Names at Baptism: that is, that now, when we discern between good and evil; and that the things, which our Sponsors undertook for us, are for our advantage, and such

such as it had been our duty to do, whether they had, or had not, promised we should, we do solemnly ratify, and take upon ourselves to perform them. Namely, *that we will renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; that we will believe all the Articles of the Christian faith; and that we will keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our life.*

This is what is meant by being confirmed; and it is done in the presence of the Bishop, who, after the example of the Apostles, (as you will see from several passages of the New Testament, such as Acts 8. v. 17, and Acts 19. v. 6.) adds to his solemn benediction *the Imposition of Hands.*

To you, therefore, whose duty it is to prepare Youth for this Rite, from Nature, your Engagements at the Font, in the character of Sponsors, or from the

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relation ye bear to them, as Masters, or Guardians; I recommend, in the second place, to consider *the Reasonableness, and Utility of Confirmation.*

By some unhappy Fatality, this, like many other duties of our holy Religion, is by some held in low estimation; yet, upon a fair examination, it will appear to be a very useful, necessary, Institution. For, can you conceive any thing of greater Utility than for young Persons, just arrived at that age, when their temptations are many, and their forces weak; when they are to encounter the World, and have had little experience of it; to be fortified with religious Principles, and pre-engaged in the cause of Virtue? The way to this is, to make them recollect their baptismal Covenant, and give their Personal Security for the performance of it. The best, perhaps, and greatest they can give, is their public, avowed, profession to observe and fulfil it, declared in the sight of God and his Church; and en-  
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couraged by the hopes of divine assistance therein from the prayers of the Bishop, and others, present.

The Church of England, in requiring this of young Persons, is not singular. *Buxtorf* tells us, that, when the Jewish Children arrived at the age of Thirteen, and had been taught the Law, and their Prayers, they were presented by their Parents before an holy Assembly, and there solemnly took upon themselves *to observe the Law*: and from that time they held themselves responsible for their Transgressions. And *Josephus* adds, *they could as readily give an Account of the Law, as they could answer to their Names.*

If we search farther, we shall find something parallel to this among Heathen Nations. It was required of the *Perſians*, when they came to Man's estate, to swear, *that they would despise all filthy lucre, bodily pleasure, and vain glory; that they would be virtuous; that they would worship the Gods; honour*

*bonour their Parents; speak Truth; do good; and never violate their Engagements.* It is also recorded of the *Athenians*, that, when their young Men were enrolled, they bound themselves by an Oath to observe the *Solemnities, and received Customs of their Country, and to reverence, and defend the Religion in which they were born.*

All this establishes the *Utility* of Confirmation, and encourages us to enquire, Thirdly, *who are the proper Candidates for it.* These are all such as have been baptized in their earlier years, when they were unable to judge and act for themselves. As for those, who were baptized at a riper age, and in their own Persons sealed the Covenant with God, I do not conceive it necessary that they be confirmed; because, as Confirmation is no more than a public declaration that we undertake for ourselves, what had been undertaken for us by others; such Persons as did bind themselves originally, can subject themselves to no greater obligation than they

they were under before : however it may not be amiss for them, and indeed for all adult Christians, to see others confirmed ; because it is natural at the time to recollect, whether they have not in many instances, broken their Vow ; and, if they have, privately to resolve, through the Grace of God, to observe it more religiously for the time to come.

There are Others also, who are under no necessity to be confirmed. I mean, such as have received the *Lord's Supper* : for, as this is the highest Act of our Religion, and presupposes the Communicant not only to have been baptized, but to have well weighed the Obligations which the first Sacrament laid upon him, and also to live in an actual and habitual performance of them ; for them to be confirmed is to return from *strong meats unto milk again.*

It is necessary to mention but one thing more, and that is, the Absurdity of being

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confirmed more than once. When once you take upon you the performance of your baptismal Covenant, you engage for your whole Life; and if you think, by repairing to the Bishop a second time, to wipe off your transgressions during the interval between one Confirmation and another, you trifle with him, and yourself: these transgressions must be purged by Repentance, and a Newness of Life, and these are your only Cure.

Upon the whole, *such Persons as were baptized in their Infancy, have not yet received the Lord's Supper, nor have been confirmed before*, are the proper Candidates for it; and I have nothing upon the Subject to add, except the Age of the party, for his other qualifications will be mentioned hereafter.

The propereſt Age is from *Fourteen to Sixteen*; for at Sixteen the Church deems us fit to receive the Lord's Supper: and I say from Fourteen, because, although we

we do now and then see a Child of Twelve or Thirteen, who, by the advantage of an uncommon capacity, or by better Instruction and Education than falls to the lot of most Children, is better enabled to judge of this Rite, than others of the same Age; (for which reason such are sometimes admitted to it) yet, in general, it is otherwise, and therefore the Confirmation of them is better delayed: the more so, because, if no opportunity for it should offer sooner, the Necessity of it may be superseded by receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

I come now, in the fourth and last place, to shew, *what is required of the Candidates, before, at, and after, Confirmation.*

Before Confirmation, after Notice of the Celebration of it, it is expedient that they repair to their Minister, and signify their Intention to him: that so he may be enabled to judge of their Qualifications,

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and assist them in their Preparation. In the next place, they should look over the Office of *Confirmation*, which will naturally send them back to the *Catechism*, where they will see what their Godfathers and Godmothers promised for them. After this, they must diligently examine themselves, and see how far they have performed it; wherein they have been deficient, and in what Particulars chiefly. When this is done, they are by Prayer, and Application to the throne of Grace, to beg of God to forgive what is past, and assist them in their resolutions and endeavours to amend. They must sit down and consider, that they are now solemnly engaging for their Whole Lives; and are to proceed in a Course of Religion at an Age most averse from it; when they have the giddiness, and the passions of Youth to contend with, and the examples of others, thoughtless, and as gay, as themselves. They must remember, that on their setting out well depends their future Success; and that as they

qualify themselves for Confirmation, they, in all probability, will be good or bad Men. And lastly, that their Happiness in This World, as well as the Next, is Conditional, and rests entirely on the promise of God made to Obedience: therefore, as Life is uncertain, and Death to be expected in every stage of it, they can never be assured of happiness, unless they be obedient to him from their Youth.

Having thus explained what they must do, before Confirmation, I go on to their behaviour, *at it*. This must be *grave and serious*, and it must be *very sincere*. It must be grave and serious, because it is transacting an Affair upon which their Salvation greatly depends: if they take due care to prepare themselves for it, this Act will give a Tincture, and an Efficacy, to all that shall follow: therefore, as they would not willingly set their hand to a Writing, in which they are nearly interested, without knowing, and considering the Contents of it, so neither will

they, or ought they, to offer themselves to the Bishop, without a proper sense of the Importance of their Engagement, and steady resolutions to observe, and perform, it.

They must also remember, that this Engagement, they enter into, is made *publickly*. Do ye here, says the Bishop, in the presence of God, and of this Congregation, &c. a most awful Appeal, and on a most awful Occasion! Their Behaviour therefore should be very *sincere*: because a want of Sincerity here is not barely a want of Honesty, but it is a want of regard to all that concerns them nearest: to all, in short, that a rational Creature can think of much importance. It is for this, their Minister examines, and instructs them; it is for this, he attends, and presents, them; and it is for this, they are required to perform it before the Bishop, the highest Minister in the Church of Christ, and a Character which every good Mind must reverence.

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Our next Enquiry is, How the Candidates are to conduct themselves, *After Confirmation*.—Soon as they retire from the Church, they should repair to their Chamber; and there return thanks to God for his goodness in admitting sinful Dust and Ashes to a Covenant with him. — Then, let them beg of him to grant them, of his Grace, power to persevere in their resolutions, and to continue in an uniform course of, Obedience to his Will, Belief of his Word, and a religious Observance of his Ordinances. When they have done this, let them not think the Catechism to be no longer of use to them; It never is useless; on the contrary, it is always a sensible, salutary, Remembrance, and a kind of Touch-Stone, whereby they may prove the Measure of their Obedience, and regulate all their failures in Duty.

All I have farther to mention is, that the great end of Confirmation is, to prepare them for *the Lord's Supper*. It is in-

deed made almost an indispensable Condition of our Admittance to it: *None*, says the Rubrick, *shall be admitted until such time as be be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.* — Soon therefore as they have been confirmed, they should make the work perfect, by qualifying themselves for that Sacrament. The best Qualification is an habitual good life; but, for their farther Instruction, it is adviseable that they read some short Tracts on the Subject; and these, I could wish may be such, as their Minister shall recommend to them\*. I mention this, because an injudicious choice has misled many well-disposed Christians, and is one principal Cause that this necessary duty is so much neglected.

\* Among others, an *Essay on the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.* By a Layman. London, printed for J. Walter, at Homer's Head, Charing Cross. Price bound One Shilling: And *Archbishop Synge's Answer to all the Excuses and Pretences which Men ordinarily make for their not coming to the Holy Communion.* Price Three-pence.

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L E C T U R E VIII.

MY Design, in this Lecture, is to remind you of those sacred Resolutions and Promises, which, at different times, and upon different occasions, we all make. But, before I particularize any of them, it may have its use to observe, that, be the thing promised ever so trifling, our word is sacred, and may not be violated. So again, be the person, to whom the promise is made, ever so inconsiderable, it is nevertheless binding; it still is a Promise; and, if we wantonly break it, we have no longer any Pretensions to Honesty, or the good Esteem of Mankind.

If this be true in the intercourse between one Man and another, will it not be much worse in what passes between Man and his Creator? if the one be mean and dishonourable; the other is shameful and impious; if the one deserves Slight

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and Contempt; the other deserves Anger and Punishment: if our Promises to Men are binding, much more are our Promises to God. Yet, such are all our Professions of Service; such are all our Vows of Amendment; such are all the Resolutions we make in our more serious hours; and such, in short, is every Obligation we lay ourselves under to him.

Here then, surely, is a Field for severe recollection, and that self-examination, which are duties at all times, especially on Sundays, and other Seasons set apart for them.

I shall therefore endeavour to set before you most of those solemn Promises, which, on different Occasions, we all make.

The first of these is, at our *Baptism*: and it is, *that we will renounce the Devil, and all his works, the pomps, and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh: that we will believe all the Articles of*

*of the christian faith; and that we will keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our life.* All ye therefore, who have been baptized, but are not yet of age to be confirmed, who daily are instructed by your Parents, and others, in what passed at your Baptism, should consider, whether you have done as was then promised for you; whether you love and honour those who remind you of it, and are desirous to do as they bid you: if you are, and endeavour to do so, God will bless you; but, if ye be the Children of Disobedience, you will also be the Children of Wrath.

The next is, at being *Confirmed*. In this sacred Rite we do, in the presence of God and the Congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made at our baptism, ratifying and confirming the same in our own persons, and acknowledging ourselves bound to believe and to do all those things which our Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for us. This promise we make before the Bishop, in the house of God, and accompany

pany it with devout prostration, and prayer. Does it not therefore behove all of us, and especially such as have been lately confirmed, to take a review of our behaviour from that time to this: to see, whether we have pursued the Instructions given us on that Occasion, and carried into execution the Resolutions we so solemnly made? None, it is to be hoped, offered themselves to the Bishop, without very serious intentions to answer the designs of his coming: but they ought to be told, that one great end of Confirmation is, to prepare them for *the holy Communion*; and, as this is frequently administered, and they have many Opportunities to receive it in the course of one Year, their Neglect is wilful, and therefore highly criminal.

But, to proceed. In the holy Communion we lay ourselves, if possible, under still greater Obligations to Holiness. For, what do we when we receive the Lord's Supper, *but offer, and present ourselves,*

*selves, our Souls, and Bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively Sacrifice unto God? — Do we mean nothing, when we say this? Are we not supposed, nay, do we not suppose ourselves, to be serious, and in earnest, in it? and if we are, will it not operate on our Conduct after it? ought it not to operate on it? and if it does not, are we not found *Liars unto God*?*

Besides these principal Seasons, for engaging to perform the duties of our Religion, there are many others, when we renew our Professions: Among these, none occur to me sooner than *Our hours of Devotion*. When these are private, as in our Closet, in our retired Walk, or our Bed, it is impossible not to see when we offend, and against Whom we offend: it is impossible not to feel compunction for our Sins, thankfulness for God's forbearance, and a fear of forfeiting this through want of Amendment. Here, let every Man ask himself, how often have I resolved to alter my Conduct? how often have

I solemnly promised it? and, if I have solemnly promised it, how dare I not set about it? Has God no knowledge? can I impose upon Him? Are my repeated vows of Obedience of no obligation? will this Obedience not be expected? and, if longer delayed, will they not be deemed Mockery?

Next to our *devotions in private*, we come to what passes, when we pay them *in public*. Our Services here consist of four parts; *confession of sins*, *supplication for mercy*, *thanksgiving for good things received*, and *professed resolutions and vows of Amendment*. These are duties not confined to the *Church*, for they all may be, and we trust are, performed in the *Closet*; but come they not here with an additional gravity? if they be mockery, the mockery is the more sinful, for being so solemn. Let every Man therefore consider what he promises here: let him recollect, when he joins in the Liturgy, and in those useful intervals that give us pause for reflection, what

what Resolutions he makes : when with his Mouth he confesses his Sins, how his Soul vows to forsake them: when he acknowledges the wrath of God against Hypocrites, that he will be sincere, and without Affectation : when he hears of his purity, that he will be pure: when he is recounting his Mercies, that he will shew mercy: and when he is imploring forgiveness, that he will forgive ! I say, it is impossible to join in our public Services, and not be awakened to good Resolutions. Who, for instance, can call God his Father, and forget the honour due to him from that relation ? Who can address him in Heaven, and not in heart thither ascend ? Who can call him his Judge, and not tremble for his future Account ? Who can offer up his prayers through the Merits and Intercessions of Christ, and forget the duties which he owes to his Redeemer ? And who can be reminded of any of these particulars, without suitable Reflections and Resolutions ?

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But suppose These to fail, and a Soul so benumbed, as to slide through the Service without them, there are certain Pauses and Seasons, when they will force their way to us. In the *Psalms*, and in the *Lessons*, we see them in the person of others, and, though besotted enough to be secure for a 'while, shall by and by be awaked by Example. To these I may add those serious Mementos and Incitements, that come from the Pulpit: strange, if a Sermon strikes not some string or other! But, be this as it may, by whatever means we are led to right Reflections, and Resolutions, they are so many Promises made to the Almighty, and, as such, will be required at our hands.

What I have observed will hold good, whenever we come to Church, and join in the ordinary services of it: more still do our Minds and Consciences operate, when we receive the *Lord's Supper*: I mean, when we conceive aright of the Institution, and consider it as it is, *a thankful*

*thankful remembrance of the death, and passion of Christ, and a solemn profession of Love and Union with all his Members:* I say, whoever receives the Lord's Supper, with this Idea in his Mind, cannot fail to vow the greatest Gratitude to his crucified Saviour, Obedience to his Laws, and Forgiveness and Benevolence to all whom he loved.

Consider this, Ye, who, in spite of these sacred engagements, indulge yourselves in implacable hatreds, in malicious opinions, and misrepresentations; in discord, and variance; in anger, and clamour; who, instead of rejoicing with them who rejoice, and weeping with them that weep, are unaffected with the misfortunes of others, and perhaps contributors to them; who shut up your bowels of compassion, and see a Brother have need. Consider this Ye, who, although ye appear thankfully to commemorate the death of Christ, crucify him again, with your Sins; and, while you hypocritically

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confess him with your Mouth, in Facts do deny him. Consider it Ye, who, by not attending to the motions of your own hearts, at the Lord's Table, or any other religious duty, whether such as ye perform in your Closet, or in the Church, do, as the Jews did by their Traditions, make the Promises of God of none effect to you, because you do not keep Yours.

But, besides the opportunities for *private devotion*, which every Man has at every hour; besides the opportunities for *public*, which are frequent in every Parish; besides the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which in all is administered at least three times a year; there are other Seasons when we are particularly called upon to recollect, and amend our Lives: such is the *Sabbath-Day*; and such is *Lent*. A season this, set apart, not merely for Fasting, (for that of itself can have little merit) but for religious Retirement, and Self-denial. If we observe this, as we ought, not superstitiously, (for whatever is

is superstitious cannot be true religion) but for those pious purposes for which it is retained in our Church; that is, if we separate ourselves from our usual diversions, and observe a more than ordinary degree of Moderation in our pastimes and pleasures; if we sequester ourselves from the World, and the little Interests in it, to cultivate an acquaintance with God, and our Souls, and by an extraordinary course of Temperance give our faculties power to exert themselves: I say, if we do this, (and this it is to keep *Lent*) we shall be truly sorrowful for our Sins, and detest ourselves for committing them: and this sorrow, and this detestation cannot fail to produce in us sincere desires, and solemn resolutions, to keep clear of them for the time to come.—Will it not therefore be our duty afterwards to enquire, how far we have performed these promises, and whether they were vain words, or came from our Heart? Ye must think it will; and if, upon enquiry, you find yourselves guilty, how will ye be ac-

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quitted in the sight of the Almighty? Brethren, saith an Apostle, *if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God; but if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.* These would always set us right, if we consulted them fairly; but it is our unhappiness to *speak peace to ourselves, when there is no peace*, and to take as much pains to be deceived, as the great Enemy of our Nature does to deceive us.

These *stated* times of Meditation and Self-examination being spoken to, there are none left, except those *occasional* ones, which the Legislature, for good and wise purposes, think fit to appoint. These are usually enjoined in times of national danger and dread, *when the Judgments of God are abroad, and the Sons of Men should learn Righteousness.* Either when we fall by epidemical Sickness, such as that, which in 1666, in *London* only, flew in one year near an hundred thousand: or when we are

are alarmed with horrid convulsions of the Earth, such as in our time laid *Lisbon* in ruins, and in many parts of our own Kingdom threatened us. Or when we are *at War*: the issues of which are ever uncertain, and the immediate Effects bloody and dreadful. These Visitations, whenever they are sent, are punishments inflicted on a sinful Nation, and nothing but Reformation, and Amendment in the national Character, can avert them. Here then it is the duty of every one to contribute towards this, by his Supplications and Prayers, his fasting and alms; but, above all, by *amending Himself*: and it is impossible not to be serious in it, when he recollects that, beside the motive of Charities, Connexions of Kindred, and Country, all which should be dear to him; his *private* happiness must rise or fall with the *public*. For these reasons, on such Occasions, our Churches are unusually crowded, and a general Seriousness, and Attention to the exigencies of the Times, seem to prevail. — Is it then

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not our duty, when this first Fervour begins to abate, to recall what passed in our Minds on these days, what Compunction we felt for our Sins, and what vows of Amendment we made? All of us have some favourite Fault, and he who considered it fixed on That for his sacrifice. But shall we not enquire, whether it be not reviving? — Whether our Abhorrence of it be as great as ever? — Whether we persist in our Resolutions, and see things as they appeared to us Then? — And if, on the contrary, we perceive we grow Languid, our indignation at Sin to abate, and the Convert already wavering on the brink of a Relapse; ought we not to take the Alarm? ought we not to consider what it is to trifle with God? — *Is this a Fast, and an acceptable Day to the Lord? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under us?* — Is it even to confess, and lament, our sins for One day only? No, if that One day has not its due effect upon those that succeed it; if it doth not lay a foundation for right-

righteousness all our Life after ; our prayers, and our fasting, were Farce, and Hypocrisy ; and, instead of those salutary ends they were designed to produce, instead of averting the Judgments of God from us and our posterity, are the readiest means to bring them down upon Both.

Hitherto my Observations have been confined to what passes at our *formal Devotions*. But there are other seasons when we are apt to make promises, and afterwards as apt to forget them. These are first *in Prosperity*. It is much to be feared, that some Men enjoy an uninterrupted course of it many years, without ever looking up to the gracious Author and giver of it. To Men thus besotted, and ungrateful, I am not now speaking ; but to those, who willingly acknowledge, that all they have, and enjoy, is owing to God's good providence. Such as these cannot help being warmed with Thankfulness, especially, when they see others, who appear to deserve as much as them-

selves, sinking under grievous Afflictions. The Mind naturally breaks forth into Acknowledgments, and, in secret, resolves to make all possible returns of Praise and Obedience.— What shall we say then, if the same Men afterwards ascribe them to their own Address and Industry; or, instead of employing these Gifts to the honour of God, and the benefit of their Fellow-creatures, make them subservient to the purposes of Oppression, and Lust? If, instead of communicating, they engross them; and, instead of being better Men for them, are so much the worse? If they presume upon their present Situation, and cry out, *We shall never be removed?* — Yet this is the case with many, or most of us, and is one Instance, among more, where we forget our solemnest Vows, and insult our Benefactor, and Judge.

A Second very interesting Period is, *when we are surrounded with Calamities.* This is a season when the Mind, free from that

that dissipation and levity which attend on more fortunate hours, is awakened, and thoughtful. He, who in an happier state could not see the Indulgence of Providence, readily acknowledges, and feels, its Corrections: he knows in the Hands of God *are the Issues of Life, and Death; of good, and evil;* and persuaded, as he must be, that He, who made the wound, alone can bind it up; he betakes himself to Confession, and Prayer; calls his past ways to remembrance, renews his former vows of Amendment, and, till the present storm is blown over, is a new, and a much better, Man. Strange, that at the first return of Happiness all these Impressions wear off, pass away like the Morning Cloud, and as the Dew at Sunrise!—Yet, thus it is with most of Mankind; few of them have the gratitude to think, and say, with the Psalmist, *I will go into thine house with burnt Offerings, and will pay thee the vows which I promised with my lips, and spake with my mouth, when I was in Trouble.* Yet, for all these violations

tions of plighted obedience God will call us to judgment: and how we can expect to be heard when in future distress we return to the same means of Succour, or how dare to depend upon that forbearance we have so much abused; or how indeed trust ourselves, and our own resolutions, are matters I cannot conceive. Sure I am, that the oftner we make it necessary to repeat these, the more we shall stand in need of them, and perhaps, because we thus stand in need of them, they will profit us little.

Much the same may be said of our professions in *Health*, and *Sickness*: but as these may be included in *Prosperity* and *Adversity*, I barely mention them. Yet I must intreat you to call to mind the solemn Vows of Amendment ye have made, when at any time ye have thought yourselves in danger of dying; when your Soul seemed to meditate a flight, and every thing around you retiring. The same Vows have ye made when ye have thought  
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yourselves respite. What Vows of Sobriety and Temperance; what Acknowledgments of God's Mercies and Favours; what Resolutions to secure an Interest in him in case of another Attack! All this, it may be, lasts only till your Health is established, and then is laid aside till the next fit of Sickness.—But is not this horrible trifling? Is it not immoral in the highest degree? and may you not justly expect that God will say, *because this people draweth nigh unto me with their Mouth, but their Heart is far from me; I will also mock at their Calamity, and laugh when their Fear cometh.*

The Instances, which have been produced, are sufficient for the purpose of this Lecture; for otherwise I might proceed to shew the same inconstancy and inconsistence in those Resolutions we make, as we glide along the Current of Life. In each of the great Stages of it we promise to act well in the next: our Manhood shall correct the Follies of Youth;

Youth; and Age, like kindly Autumns, ripen the Fruits of Manhood. The Seasons return, and our Professions return; one year succeeds to a former, and another to That; till he, who proposed to be a New Man the *next* day, finds he had unexpectedly arrived at his *last*. Here, to his other offences comes the accumulated guilt of numberless Resolutions to quit them; and the Consciousness, that he never could depend on them, sinks him to his Grave in Despair.

*Promise therefore unto the Lord, and keep it,* and whenever a sense of Blessings received, a dread of Evil to come, or any other Motive, disposes you to religious Reflections, and Resolutions, remember the words of the Son of Sirach, BETTER IT IS THOU SHOULDEST NOT VOW, THAN THAT THOU SHOULDEST VOW, AND NOT PAY.



